



PREQUEL UPDATE • STAR WARS DEMOLITION • DECIPHERCON 2000

STAR WARS[®]

INSIDER

TOPDECK PRESENTS

EPISODE II

GEORGE LUCAS SPEAKS!

BONUS INTERVIEWS:

Rick
McCALLUM

Robin
GURLAND



THE LIGHT SIDE

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FROM
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How do you find a young Owen Lars more than 20 years after the elder Owen makes his screen debut? Is Hayden Christensen really as great a everybody says he is? Robin Gurland, Casting Director for Episode II, dishes on the casting process.

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If you haven't read *The Onion*, you're just not trying. This timely, hilarious parody newspaper makes fun of every American event that comes along. Needless to say, that can't fail to include *Star Wars*. Scott Chernoff gives us the scoop.

ON THE COVER

C-3PO and R2-D2 in their *Star Wars*: Episode II shells. Photo by Sue Adler.





from the editor's desk

YOU HEAR ME BABY? HOLD TOGETHER!

IT'S A LONG STORY. I'LL AT LEAST TRY TO MAKE IT ENTERTAINING.

When Wizards of the Coast got the rights to make a roleplaying game based on *Star Wars*, we were all pretty excited. We were even more excited when we found out we were going to be doing a magazine devoted to *Star Wars* games because, hey, more *Star Wars* is better, right? Then—boy oh boy—when we found out we were going to get to do *Star Wars Insider* too, they had to fit us with restraining bolts to keep us in our chairs working.

As fun as doing *Insider* is, the process of getting to do the magazines has been tough. *Insider* just sort of seemed to fall off the map for a while and not the least of our concerns was for you, the reader. Because of a bunch of complicated legal and financial stuff, we had to operate in stealth mode for a bit. I'm sorry for the wait, and I especially apologize to our subscribers who were very patient. But *Insider* is back.

So who is the disembodied first-person narrator? I'm Jeff Quick, Editor-in-Chief of *Star Wars Insider*. If you've read our sister publication, *Star Wars Gamer*, you've probably seen me shooting my mouth off over there too. If you haven't, well...trust me, I do. Go find a copy and see for yourself.

I'm a proud member of the generation that grew up with *Star Wars*. I saw it in theaters when I was 5 (don't bother doing the math, I'm 29 now) and like you, I was immediately hooked. That's one reason why a few months ago I marched upstairs into the office our Group Publisher, Johnny Wilson, waved my hand in a small, circular motion and said, "I have a job on your new *Star Wars* magazine." And Johnny said, "You have a job on my new *Star Wars* magazine." (Try it on your boss some time!)

Corrections:

The *Ultimate Guide to Episode I*, mentioned in the book column in issue 51, has been replaced by another book, to be announced soon.

The URL given for the Jawa Trader in issue 51 was incorrect. The correct URL appears in this issue's Jawa Trader. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

We expect that this issue of *Insider* will probably find its way into the hands of a whole new audience. If you're one of those people, welcome. We're your source for official news, pictures, and general wonderment as it relates to *Star Wars*. Every issue we'll bring you exclusive interviews with *Star Wars* personalities on both sides of the camera. We'll give you previews of upcoming *Star Wars* films that no one else gets to see. And we'll be your eyes onto a world changed by having *Star Wars* in it.

If you're a long-time reader, I want to welcome you too, and also promise you all of that stuff I wrote above. In addition though, I want to say thanks for sticking with us. You've waited patiently while *Insider* got back on its feet, but we're back and we've got some great stuff for you just ahead. I want to let you know that your magazine has not fallen into the hands of soulless corporate goons (depending on your definition of "soul"). Our job is not to wreck *Insider*. Our job is to make it better.

To that end, we'd sure like to hear from you. Tell us what you want to see. Who do you want interviewed? What do you want to know? What horrible diatribe can you get 2-1B started on? We're desperate for attention. Please send it to us. Our contact information is littered throughout the magazine, but here it is again:

Rebel Rumblings
Star Wars Insider
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Renton, WA 98057

Let us know.

—JEFF
JEFF QUICK
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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rebel rumblings

Remembering Sir Alec Guinness

"I can't believe he's gone." —
Luke Skywalker, *A New Hope*

I haven't been able to stop crying since I heard about Sir Alec Guinness' passing (*Insider* #51). How can I possibly put into words what he meant to me as an actor, as Obi-Wan, and just as Sir Alec? His contribution to the industry is invaluable, and his memory, as long as I live, will never die or be forgotten.

"The Force will be with you ...
always." —Obi-Wan Kenobi, *A
New Hope*

ALEXANDRA LUDÉ
San Carlos, CA

I was very sad upon hearing of the passing of Sir Alec Guinness, and I wanted to send my condolences to his family and to our friends at the *Insider*. I absolutely loved Obi-Wan Kenobi, and will always think of him. Aside from *Star Wars*, *The Lady Killers* was an awesome movie. But it was his portrayal of Obi-Wan and the first time I heard about the Force that I will never forget! Whenever I am in a jam, I always hear him saying, "You must do what you feel is right, of course." Sir Alec will never be forgotten. May the Force be with him, always.

BILL DOUCETTE
Bethlehem, NH

Sir Alec Guinness will be greatly missed. His brilliant work brought that important quality of reality to *Star Wars*, as he introduced the concept of the Force to us for the first time. He

was the quintessential teacher, with his combination of wisdom and kindness. Played to perfection, his character has become an icon. As always, George Lucas knew what he was doing when he cast this great actor, who was a knight in film and in life.

JOSH KOLANSKY
Roseville, CA

There will never be a Jedi quite like Obi-Wan, and there will never be an actor quite like Sir Alec Guinness.

AMBER BURGESS
St. Marys, PA

Nifty #50

Your 50th issue was great. And what a way to commemorate it—with the first glimpse of the young Darth Vader! I'd have to say, that was probably one of the best interviews I've ever read in *Insider*. Hayden Christensen, although seeming somewhat new at this sort of role, looks like he's going to play an awesome Anakin Skywalker. I think anyone would have a challenge with that role, but he looks like he's definitely up for it.

LUKE LÓPEZ
Cucamonga, CA

WOW! That's what I have to say about *Insider* #50. I loved every single article! My congratulations as well to Hayden Christensen—I really enjoyed the interview and

look forward to seeing him on the big screen. Good luck, Hayden! The letter from George Lucas was fantastic as well. He has really done a good job with *Star Wars* thus far, and I know it's going to keep getting better. The prequel update was also excellent. With each issue, I learn more and more about the work on Episode II. Great job, guys!

STEVEN BUTTS
Wellston, OH

I wanted to write in and tell you how great *Insider* #50 was. I've been with you guys since issue #1, and I must say it's been a great ride! I think you really came into your own with *Insider* #32, when you changed the logo again. I mean, just look at the covers since then—wow! Great design, colorful, and the interior content and layout is always fantastic. I really love the dual covers you do occasionally, and I hope you continue to do that. The best subscriber cover thus far has been the TIE fighter pilot cover on #35—way cool!

Anyway, back to *Insider* #50. I was thrilled when I got to the "Word Up!" feature and discovered that a quote from a 1989 letter of mine was included in the "Welcome to the Club" box on page 52—right beneath George Lucas' quote! It's a nice feeling to think that, of the vast

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 76

wanna rumble?

Write to: REBEL RUMBLINGS, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057, or e-mail RebelRumblings@aol.com. Letters may be edited for clarity and space considerations. All mail MUST include your full name and home city. *Star Wars Insider* is not responsible for any unsolicited material received. This is not the address for Lucasfilm casting. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are unfortunately not possible. Your weapons—you will not need them.

Welcome to the DARK SIDE



Learn more about
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of the Jedi—from
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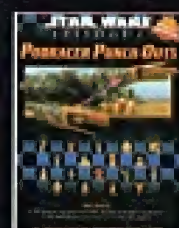
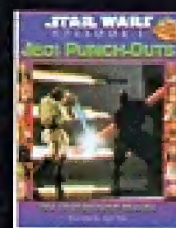
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episode II

PREQUEL UPDATE

WITH PRODUCER RICK MCCALLUM

BY DAN MADSEN



HOW IS IT GOING SO FAR?

Great, absolutely fantastic. We'll have done about nine weeks of filming in Australia, then on to Italy, Tunisia, Spain, and finally England.

WHY GO BACK TO ELSTREE STUDIOS IN ENGLAND INSTEAD OF SHOOTING EVERYTHING IN AUSTRALIA?

Just scheduling. It's just easier. I would rather give Ewan more time off. Because Ewan was on a film that went over schedule and he had been here in Sydney all that time, so I wanted to give him as much of a break as possible. He finishes in August, because we don't need him in Tunisia in Italy, and then I'll bring him back in the very end. It's just as easy for me to do it in London as it is Australia.

WHY SHOOT THE INTERIORS FIRST AND

THEN GO ON LOCATION? DOESN'T THE CREW USUALLY GO ON LOCATION FIRST AND THEN MOVE INTO THE STUDIO?

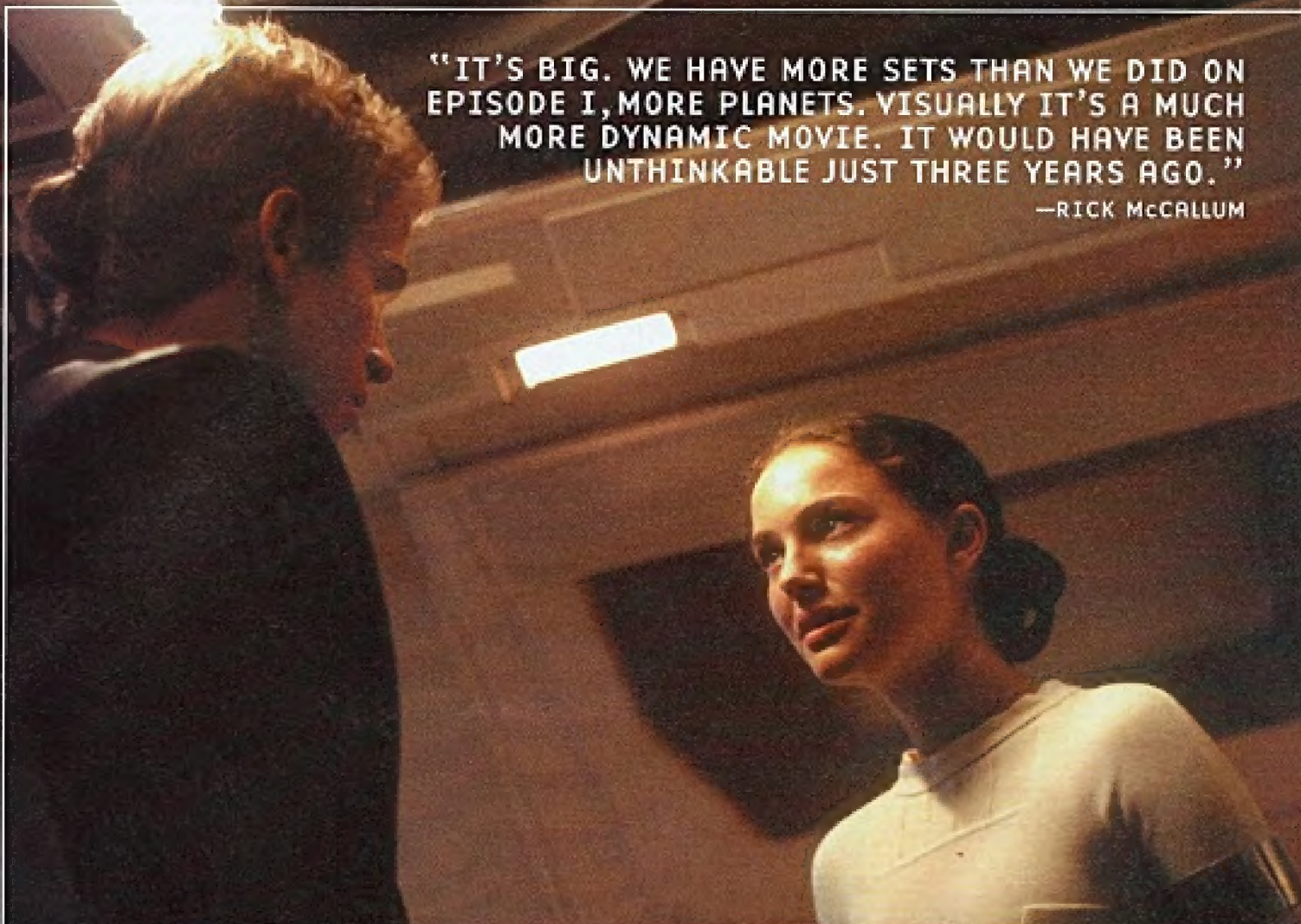
Those days are long gone. The reason that you used to have to do your exteriors first was that so you knew what your lighting conditions would be like for the interiors. In the digital world it doesn't matter. We can change the exterior to anything we want to match the interior. So you deal with what you want instead of what you get. And then what you want, you recreate. And even if it's a rainy day, it doesn't matter. It's been about 10 years since we worried about things like that.

HOW HAS SHOOTING BEEN WITH THE SONY DIGITAL CAMERA?

It's been fantastic. There are things we've had to work through considering that we got the

camera later than we would have liked, and we had to work to get two very different companies—Sony and Panavision in synch. For a huge conglomerate like Sony, this is just a tiny project. And Panavision is making a huge leap to the future, which it isn't even sure exists yet. To have the two of them over the last six years commit to something where they have to spend really serious money without a contract, with finite knowledge of whether or not the camera was going to be used was pretty amazing.

It's a whole different medium on one level and it's a whole different skill set on another. For us, I love it. It's so easy and you know exactly—hopefully—what your movie's going to look like. Our real problems are going to be in exhibition, once we try and take what we know is the future and try to force it into the analog world that exists now,



"IT'S BIG. WE HAVE MORE SETS THAN WE DID ON EPISODE I, MORE PLANETS. VISUALLY IT'S A MUCH MORE DYNAMIC MOVIE. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN UNTHINKABLE JUST THREE YEARS AGO."

—RICK MCCALLUM

[FACING] A hooded Obi-wan Kenobi (actor Ewan McGregor) on his way to keep an important appointment. Photo by Lisa Tomasetti. **[ABOVE]** Anakin Skywalker (actor Hayden Christensen) and Padmé (actress Natalie Portman) exchange words in a starship corridor. Photo by Sue Adler.

with poor projectors and horrible presentation. But that is all changing. This thing is the first little footstep in a different world that audiences are going to be able to experience movies in. And it's going to happen so quickly that it's going to make people's heads spin. So it's a good thing.

YOU'RE USING THE DIGITAL CAMERAS IN THE TUNISIAN DESERT WITH THE HIGH TEMPERATURES?

Yes, that's a big test, taking them into the world. But, you know, the technology is so sound. It's basically a digital BetaCam camera with a system that records on high definition tape instead of digital Beta tape. So the camera's been out there four or five years; it's very robust and strong. But this is only an interim step. High def isn't the ultimate answer, just the way you acquire images. And if you acquire them digitally, you have the ability to manipulate every

frame with total control. Also, you're able to set up the framework for the future of how films are not only distributed, but, much more important for us, exhibited. You know, once we can encode the high def frame with certain artistic information—the details that give us exactly what the projected image should look like—then we can really show the movie that we're making.

Exhibition probably isn't going to, or can't invest in digital projection technology anyway. That's going to be some consortium that's going to be put together to place the projectors in theaters. Once we can encode information in our movies that can be interpreted by those projectors, you will be so shocked to see what passes for theatrical exhibition today. There are exceptions. There are some really smart exhibitors who make it a fun experience, have great seats, and project a movie with incredible sound and picture quality. So it can be done.

HAS THE TECHNOLOGY ADVANCED A LOT SINCE EPISODE I?

Yes. Things that took us six months to do, take us two days to do now. There are other things that are technologically as challenging as Episode I. But the whole thing about it is that we just try to learn how to use the new tools. We can concentrate more on story and character and know that that we can achieve something for the amount of money that we have available and be able to visualize worlds that we just couldn't do before. It's big. We have more sets than we did on Episode I, more planets. Visually it's a much more dynamic movie. It would have been unthinkable just three years ago.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EXPERIENCES YOU HAD IN LEAVESDEN AND HERE IN SYDNEY?

I love both. I have lived in England since 1980. England's much more my home than the

United States. So I love being there, I love shooting there. But I also love Australia. It's much easier. The lifestyle is much easier; this is an interesting place. Visually it's fantastic because it's the size of America with the population of Los Angeles and San Diego. There is a very strong work ethic but it only lasts for four days and 10 hours and then there is a serious partying element to it that affects the crew and the way in which we work. It's much more laid back, and nowhere as materialistic. This is kind of like America 50 years ago. It's still a much more gentle place; I still haven't seen one single policeman after six and a half

tion when I got a script three days before we started shooting, and we were making one movie and George was making another, and suddenly—three days before—they have to coincide with each other. But that was fun because that was more like television. And that is part of the whole belief that we've had: To not take it too seriously, to make it fun, and an interesting experience. We were making the first virtual movie.

WERE YOU SCARED BEFORE YOU GOT THE SCRIPT?

No, I wasn't scared. We talked everyday, an hour, hour and a half every morning on the phone. We would go through every specific. It was better for George at the time to concentrate on the script because he knew he could trust us with costumes and sets and the basic look and design of the picture. It was very good. And all of us have been together for a very long time, the production designer, cameraman, editor. There is a shorthand. Because of the time difference we would

many times and you have to actually say why does that happen? Usually it's the process.

HOW HAS HAYDEN CHRISTENSEN BEEN FITTING IN?

Brilliant. I love the dude. When you meet him, you will see, he is just special. I am very happy with him.

HOW DO YOU THINK AUDIENCES ARE GOING TO DEAL WITH WATCHING HIM GO OVER TO THE DARK SIDE?

If they care enough about him, it will be unbearable. Because it's no different when you love somebody; all of us in our personal lives have had that problem with some member of our family. That's what the whole movie is about. It's a saga of the family. It's no different than any other family. Sooner or later from one generation to the next there is somebody who screws up badly. And you never understand. And if you are a close family, you love them anyway, and nothing is more unbearable when you can't help them.

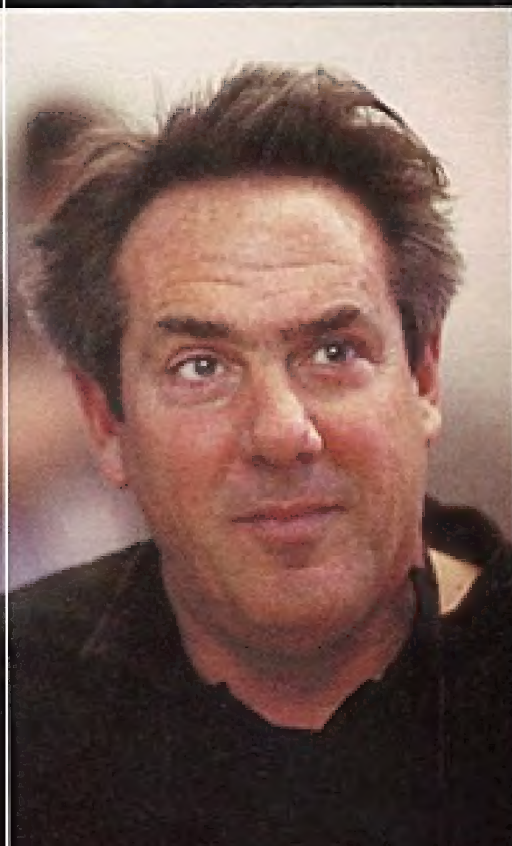
"YOU OFTEN SIT DOWN TO MAKE A CAR THAT IS CHEAP, OR A PIECE OF FURNITURE THAT WILL ONLY LAST FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS, BUT NOBODY EVER SITS DOWN AND SAYS, HEY LET'S MAKE A BAD MOVIE."

—RICK MCCALLUM

send him stuff, very meticulous and specific stuff that we needed answers to. He would have eight or ten hours—his whole day—to respond to it. And that meant better thinking, actually. One of the biggest problems with most directors is that they lose so much because they have to make decisions instantly. And I have found over the years, interestingly enough, that I would change the way I structured the prepping of a movie to allow the director to have more of an opportunity to really think about things instead of just having to commit to them. And that's because—and I've said this before—nobody ever sits down to make a bad movie. You often sit down to make a car that is cheap, or a piece of furniture that will only last for a couple of years, but nobody ever sits down and says, hey let's make a bad movie. And yet there is something fundamentally wrong so

EWAN IS NOT THE NEW KID ANYMORE.

Yes, but he's a different person now. I don't mean literally Ewan, but he was very funny talking about it the other day. He said, "Hell, I'm no longer the youngest guy on the film anymore." But he has always been his whole life, because when he cracked it, I think he was 17 or 18, and for the last six or seven years he has always been the youngest guy on the movie and now suddenly... He doesn't have an ego problem with that at all. He is a most generous person, especially with Hayden, but suddenly now he is the mentor, you know? Now he has got to help Hayden get through what he's just gone through. And I think they have really become close. That will be very helpful to him. Because Ewan's never really gone that traditional American wacky route into stardom. He has always had a balance. He has never been a



[ABOVE] Episode II Producer Rick McCallum. Photo by Lisa Tomasetti.

months. No one lives more than 12 minutes away from the studio, which makes it very easy. We only do five day weeks instead of six day weeks because, again, the work ethic is different. It's much easier, it's not as tough as it is in Europe.

IS YOUR JOB ALSO EASIER?

Not really, but what happens is that I don't get burned out as quickly. If you have a little bit of a break, you are just able to zoom back quicker. Of course you can imagine the situa-

"big movie star," he is more of an independent famous person than a Hollywood manufactured one. So it will be very interesting to see what happens with both of them.

HOW'S NATALIE DOING? IT'S A DIFFERENT KIND OF ROLE THAN EPISODE I.

She's doing great. She is a woman now. She was 15 when she started on Episode I. She's 19 now. And she has gone to her first year at Harvard. She has friends around and she is on her own and her parents aren't here. So it's a totally different thing for her. She's a whole different person. Imagine being 15 years old and being the queen, the hairpiece, and the costumes... Now she gets to wear sexy costumes and she is much more attuned to who she is and what she wants to be as a person. Her life is balanced. She has a great academic career so she doesn't take stardom or any of that seriously on any level. But it frees her with her work so that's been really fantastic.

I HAVE BEEN HEARING GOOD THINGS ABOUT NATALIE AND HAYDEN. THEY SPARK TOGETHER?

I think so. Yes, they spark. I like them. I think they work really well together. And they like each other too, which is great. It's so interesting when you start to put all of it in perspective. Because now we can actually see thematically how it all works itself out. It really is a little boy, the kid that every parent wants to have, smart, mischievous, fun, good looking, everything is perfect and then what happens? What happens to him?

YOU OUGHT TO KNOW!

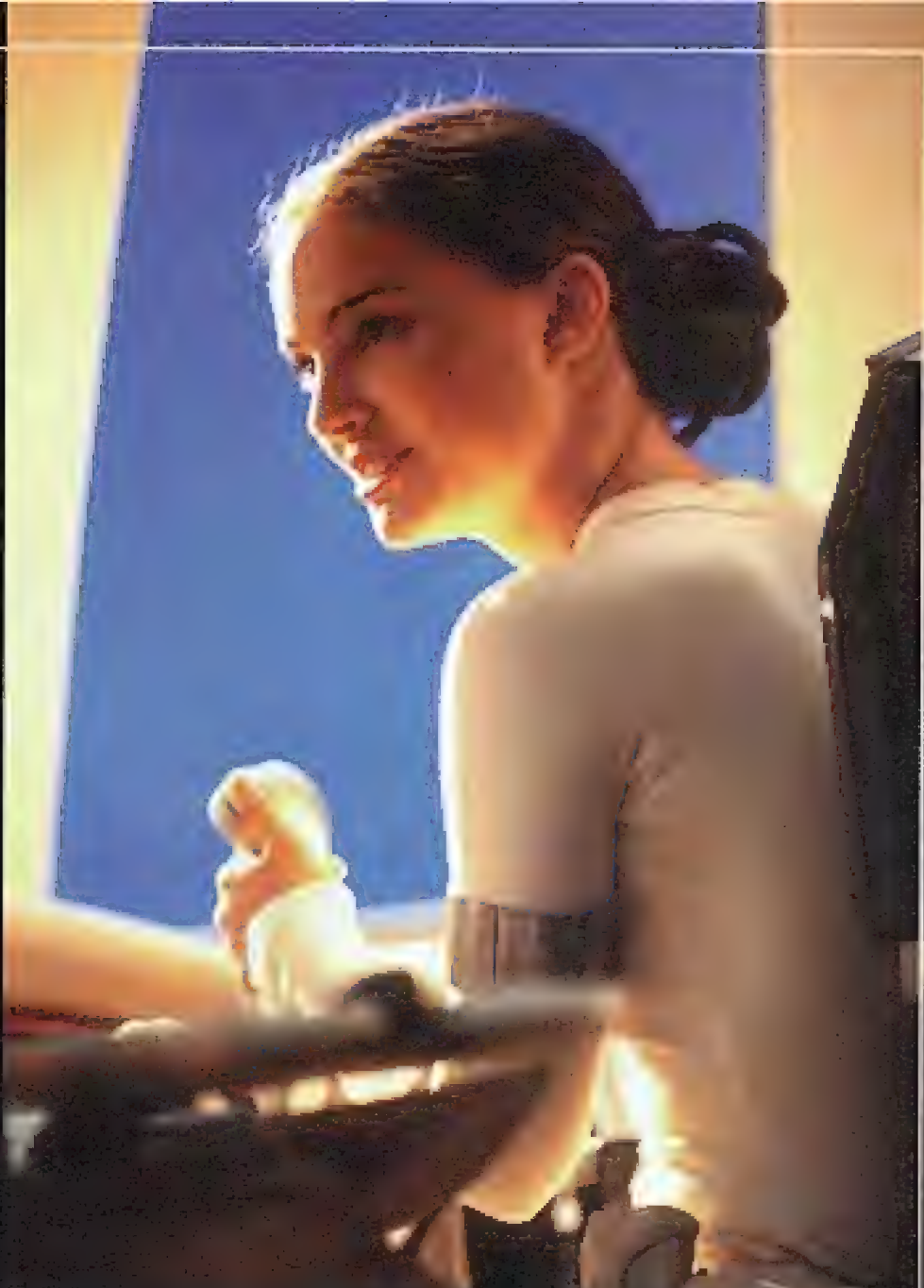
You do know what happens. You just don't know how it happens. How is what makes it interesting. It's the how that we all live through too.

WE HEARD THAT THIS MOVIE IS DARKER THAN THE FIRST ONE.

Oh yes, it is definitely.

AND THE NEXT ONE WILL BE DARKER STILL?

Absolutely, but dark is good. Darkness is illuminating. Sometimes you have to go pitch black to be able to see anything. That's what



[ABOVE] Padmé (actress Natalie Portman) takes the pilot's seat in a Nebo starship in Episode II. Photo by Sue Adler. [BELOW] Producer Rick McCallum gets the lowdown from Assistant Director James McTeigue on the set of Episode II. Photo by Paul Tiller.



happens with Anakin. Because, remember, at the end of the day he does fulfill his destiny. At the end of the day he chooses the dark side but he ultimately does redeem himself. Is that our destiny?

THAT MUST BE A MAJOR CHALLENGE, THOUGH, TO SET UP FOR THE THIRD MOVIE, KNOWING THAT.

Well the challenge is that if you don't care, then you don't give a damn about the person. It will only work if you care about him. It's just like with your own family. In America, a large percentage of the population has no ongoing relationship with its parents.

BUT IF WE CARE SO MUCH AND THAT IN THE END OF EPISODE III HE HAS GONE TO THE DARK SIDE, IS THERE A CONCERN THAT FOR VIEWERS THERE'S NOT THAT RESOLUTION?

No, because ultimately in 2006 or 2007 or sometime you are going to be able to go into a theater at 12:00 in the afternoon go and come out 12 hours later and see it all.

SO THAT'S THE PLAN?

That's my dream. I don't know that it's anybody's plan. Digitally projected. Episode I through VI in a row. That's what makes it *Godfather in Another Galaxy*.

WHAT IS YOUR DAY-TO-DAY SCHEDULE?

Insane. We have really passed the baton over to George. We manage it everyday. But it's like a military thing now. We shoot 36 to 40 shots a day. That's our driving thing that gets us through each day. We are right on schedule. We are right where we want to be, maybe slightly ahead.

DO YOU HAVE A PREFERENCE BETWEEN THE CONTROL YOU HAVE SHOOTING IN THE STUDIO VERSUS LOCATION?

Personally I love location. It's much more exciting for me because anything can happen. You just never know. It doesn't matter how well you plan, you live by the serendipity of weather. There are so many different kinds of exigencies in production that can fail. Perhaps your actor drank too much the night before and gets in a car accident or the



[ABOVE] Producer Rick McCallum and Director George Lucas cross a soundstage in Australia in front of a Sony 24p digital camera used to shoot *Star Wars: Episode II*. [BELOW] Obi-Wan Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker discuss the meaning of the day's events in the living room of Padmé's apartment on Coruscant. Both photos by Sue Adler.



driver doesn't see anything including the oncoming bus. The person who owns the house where you got permission to shoot gets a divorce and suddenly the permission vanishes. Anything can happen, and every day it does.

Whereas here you know you can control your day. It's a very controlled atmosphere. But because technologically we need to be in an atmosphere like that, and also because we have so many different worlds and so many different sets. We are shooting in 56 days but

we have 67 sets. So you can imagine some days when we are moving from one area of the stage to another. And if it's raining, that's about as much drama as we get. We know the work we have got to do.

HOW'S THE TOURIST ATTRACTION NEXT DOOR AT THE FOX STUDIO TOUR?

It's totally separate. Once you walk into our area, we control everything the minute you go through those gates. We have taken over areas that they never even thought could be

stages. You will see that as you go through our art department, our stunt centers, our wardrobe area, we have turned all kinds of areas into places where we build sets. As I said, it's not like a studio, really. This is only the second movie that's been made here at the level that we are making it. I think only the fifth altogether. We are changing it day by day.

YOU MENTIONED THE WEATHER AND THE RAIN. DO YOU CREATE A FAIR AMOUNT OF WEATHER HERE AS WELL?

Yes, we do. In fact on Stage One where you were today, that's going to be covered in rain next week for up to eight days. We are going to shoot a torrential rain storm with 30 mile an hour winds. So that will be fun. But it's very controlled again. Being in a real one is totally different.

TUNISIA WILL BE SHORTER THAN LAST TIME?

Yes. We will only be a week there. But we travel all over the place.

WE WERE TALKING YESTERDAY ABOUT THE PERFECT STORM AND ABOUT HOW SOME OF IT WAS REAL WATER AND SOME OF IT WAS COMPUTER GRAPHICS. IN TERMS OF THE RAIN SET, HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT DECIDING WHAT IS REAL AND WHAT IS LATER ADDED DIGITALLY?

You shoot the real rain and then when you want something that is a little bit more powerful, that doesn't look as naturalistic as you want, then you add the CG. There is stuff called particle animation. It's what made *Twister* work. It was taking particles and animating them to a performance level. That's what was done on *Perfect Storm* and also on *Twister* and to a large degree we pushed it to a whole level in the Podrace sequence in Episode I. When a CG element crashes on the ground and you see it break apart and pieces fly over, that is all performance driven. There is somebody who is actually creating the performance of a particle. That is really amazing to see come to life. I mean *Perfect Storm* almost cracked it totally with water, some of

it is so unbelievably realistic. That couldn't have been made two or three years ago. It would have been impossible. So each film pushes the technology a little bit further.

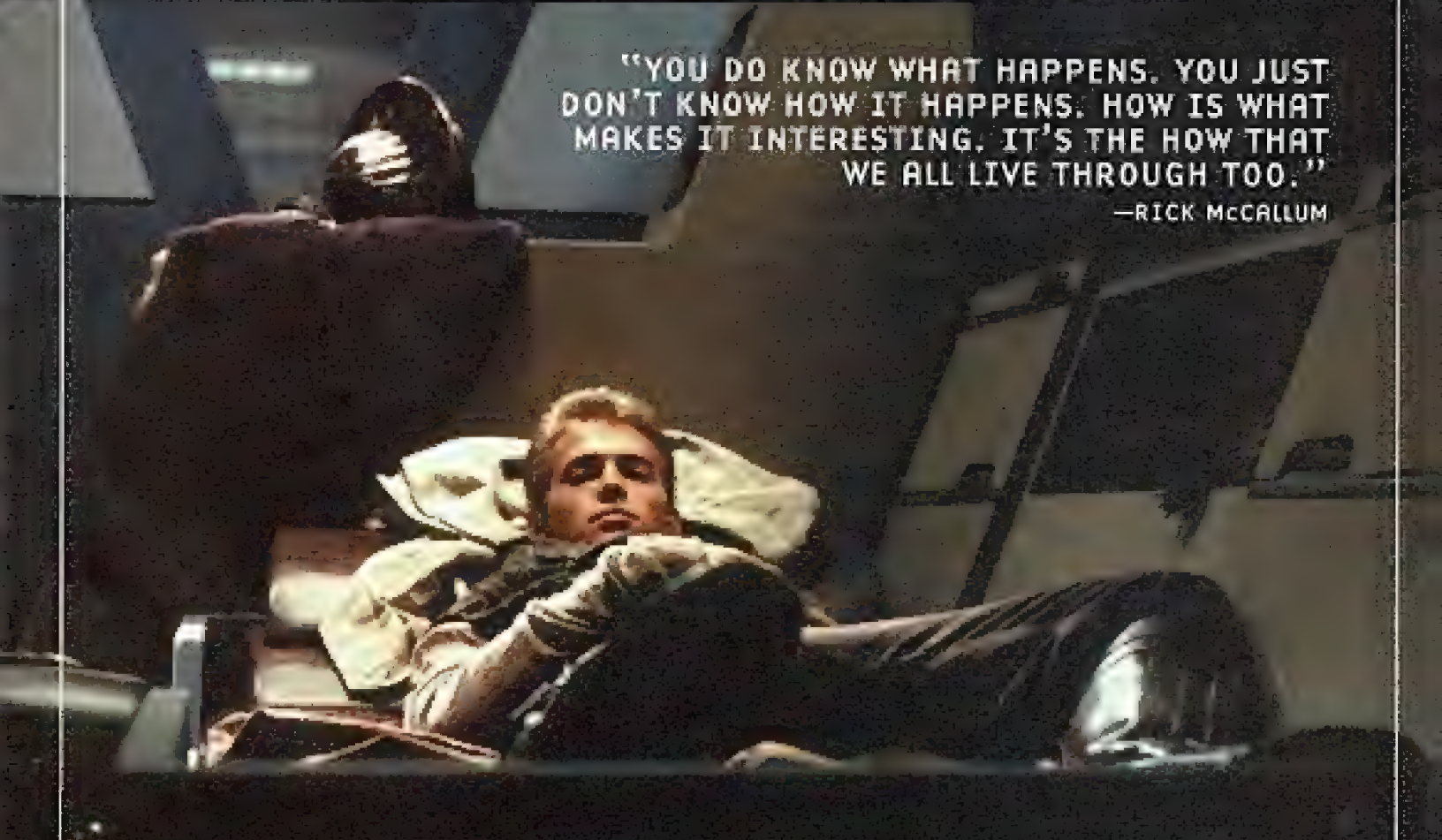
ILM DID PERFECT STORM. IS ANY OF THAT BEING USED AS RESEARCH FOR EPISODE II?

The way it works is that everything we do is taken by others, and people like Jim Cameron will take it and Spielberg will take it and whoever's out there pushing the technology, who has a vision of the world will take it and develop it further. And vice versa. And it just keeps on going and going until hopefully in about three or four years all this technology will become a small part of making a movie; it will just be no different than sound and color was.

Color went through exactly the same transition. People fought it. "No we can't have color; once you add color into film, film will be ruined!" In 1994 when we did *Radioland*

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 48

[BELOW] Anakin Skywalker has restless moments while stretched out in a bunk aboard a Naboo starship. Photo by Sue Adler.

A photograph of Anakin Skywalker (played by Jake Lloyd) lying in a bunk on a Naboo starship. He is looking up with a thoughtful expression. The background shows the interior of the ship with various panels and lights.

"YOU DO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS. YOU JUST DON'T KNOW HOW IT HAPPENS. HOW IS WHAT MAKES IT INTERESTING. IT'S THE HOW THAT WE ALL LIVE THROUGH TOO."

—RICK MCCALLUM



GEORGE LUCAS SELECT

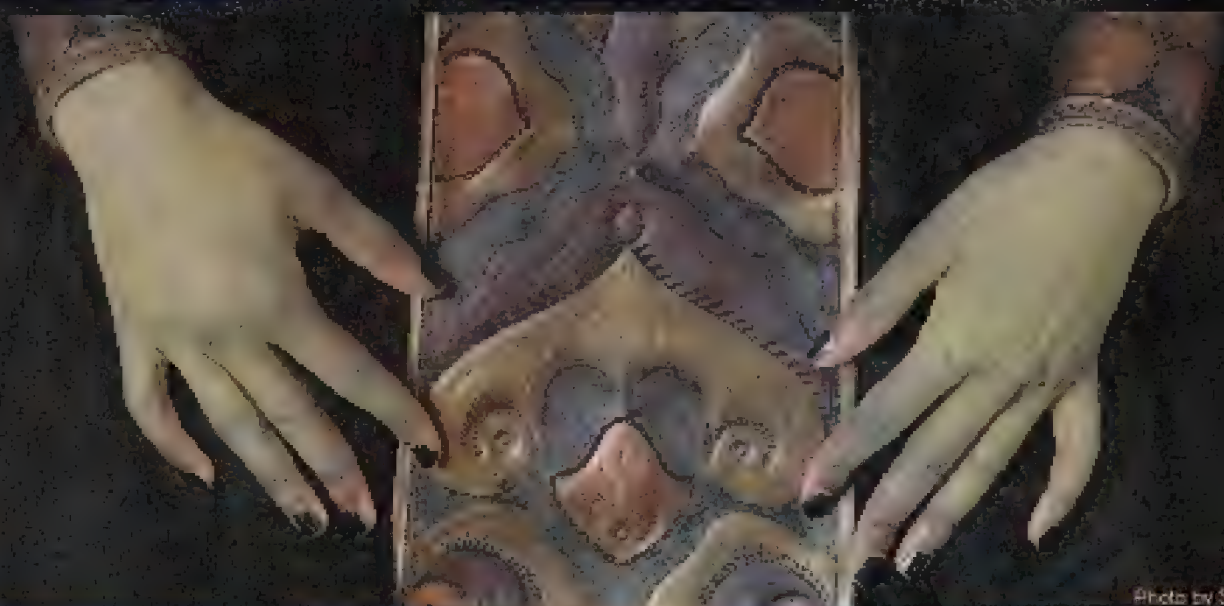


Photo by Sue Adler



Photo by George Lucas

While George Lucas is making Episode II, he wants to share some personally selected moments of the process with Star Wars fans. These photos first appeared on the official Web site, www.starwars.com. They appear here in an enhanced, printed version for the first time.

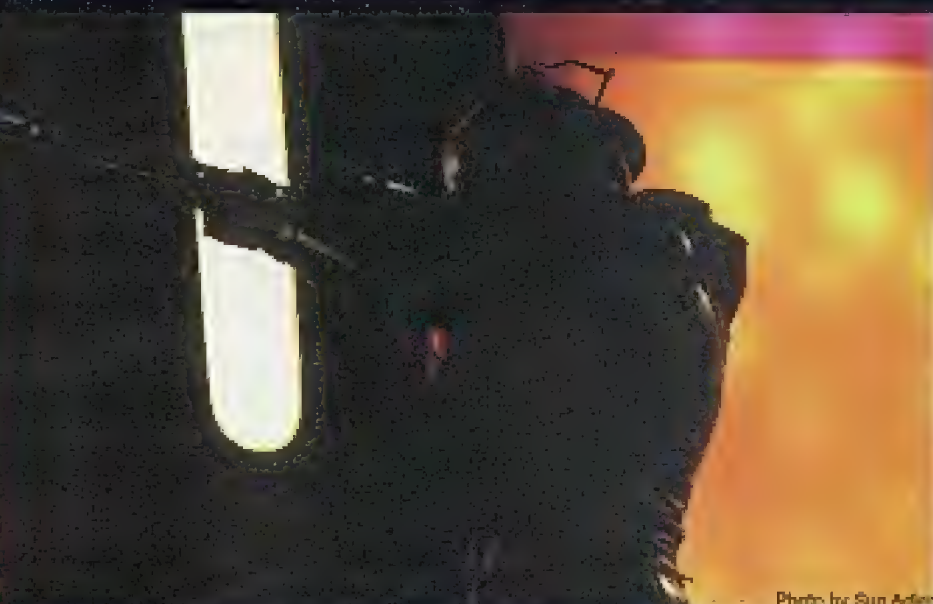


Photo by Sun Ader



■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Murders it was the first digital editing, the first film completely edited non-linearly and the film editors screamed bloody murder: "I have to touch film to be able to cut it." I don't think there are three editors now in all of Hollywood who don't edit digitally. In five and a half years the total dynamic changed throughout the world with over a billion dollars invested; thousands of people's lives changed. Technology just as a tool does not make the film better at the end of the day, but it does make it easier and you are able to do things that you couldn't do before.

YOU MENTIONED THAT IT DOESN'T NECESSARILY MAKE THE STORY BETTER. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE SCRIPT?

I love the script. I think Jonathan Hales and George did a great job. God knows they had the time to do it (laughter). I am really happy with it. The other thing is that we have reached the point where we really can make this fun. With Episode I, it was just so big, so new, so hard. Everyday you never knew if you were going to get through the day. Now we feel much more comfortable. I think we have greater ability to sit back and see what we are going to do in March and do for the added shooting.

WHERE IS THE MARCH SHOOTING GOING TO BE?

Here in Australia. And they're not re-shoots, they are additional shooting.

IS THERE ONE MAJOR SET OF ADDITIONAL SHOTS?

No, it will be the same. Probably three or four. The first one we do is in March and then there will June, July and then probably one a couple weeks before the film comes out just like we did with Episode I.

AND ALL THE ACTORS HAVE CALLED FOR THOSE TIMES TOO EVEN THOUGH YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU WILL BE USING?

It is subject to their availability so that's what makes it kind of challenging. You never know how you are going to deal with. On *Radioland Murders* the whole cast never met each other. There were 110 speaking parts and we just



An Aqualish, a Quarren, and other alien species gather in the freighter hold of a ship on the way to Naboo. Photo by Lisa Tomasetti.

couldn't schedule it to work for everyone; it's probably why the movie didn't work, but it sure was, from a production point of view, fun to be able to make happen.

HAS EPISODE II BEEN AN EASIER TIME FOR YOU BECAUSE YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH ONE ALREADY?

No, when you start to get a handle on it, you don't worry about the things that need to be worried about as much. So that part has been easier, but it's been just as hectic because of not having a script. I would have preferred to have had one in advance.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE ENDING OF EPISODE II COMPARED TO THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, WHICH PRETTY MUCH HAD AN OPEN ENDING?

I think you'll end Episode II with two paths, but you pretty much know which is going to be taken. They may go in different directions but they are going to end up at the same place. If you do that successfully, you can't wait to get to the third episode in terms of story telling. I think definitely that's where we will end up on II. Again, if you care about Hayden and Natalie,

then you really can't wait. It's like when you have been in a car crash or something like that, there is a moment of pure beauty before the unbearable. There is a moment that is quite extraordinary if you have ever been in an out of control car, it's absolutely breathtakingly beautiful. The senses, the experiences, the images that come to you; then there is a moment that you know when you are going to hit the wall that becomes unbearable. That's the painful physical side of it in terms of life and living and things like that, I think that is going to be the fun part about Episode II if you really like them.

You know what is going to happen and it's not good. He's a nice boy. But you know, you see it at work, you see it every moment of your life. You see it when you go out driving, you see it in a movie. When you see someone who's an awful person, you know he's not awful all the time. There is somebody out there who loves him. It's really interesting when you know somebody and you can't help them. They have a destiny and they are going to do it and you want to shake them. Even if you can get to them, it still doesn't usually help. ☹

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...

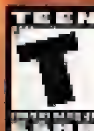
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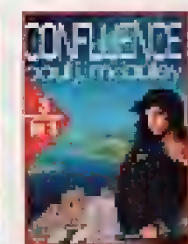
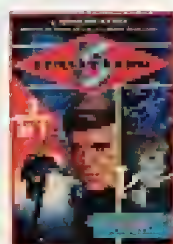
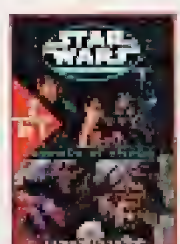
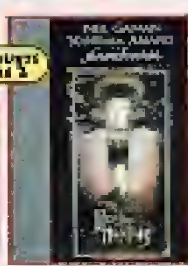
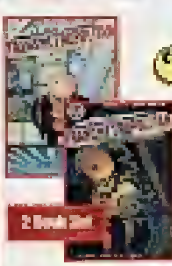
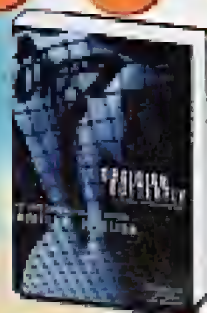
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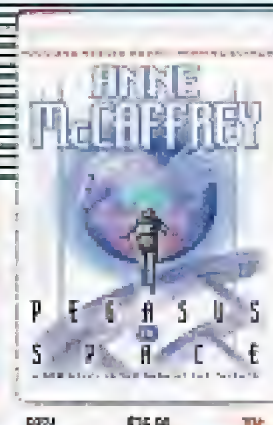
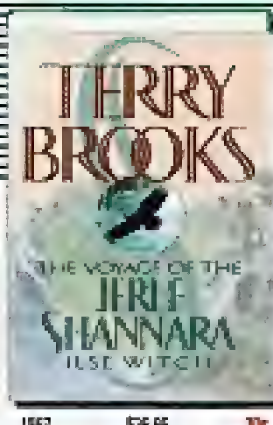
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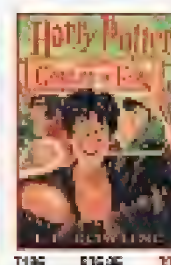
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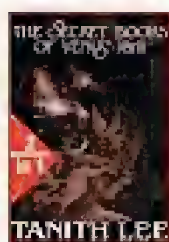
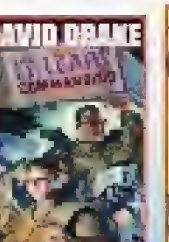
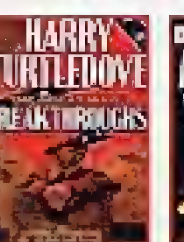
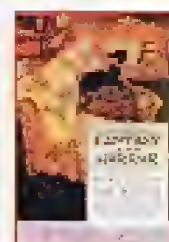
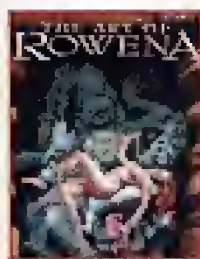
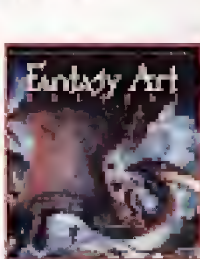
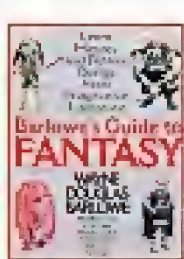
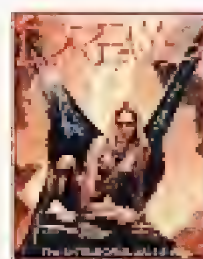


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STAR NEWS

» FROM THE WORLD OF LUCASFILM

SHELAGH FRASER 1922-2000

The *Star Wars* universe lost one of its most beloved legends last fall when Shelagh Fraser, the accomplished British actress who played Aunt Beru in the original *Star Wars*, died in London after a lengthy illness.

As Beru, Fraser brought a quiet dignity to a role that could have seemed unimportant to less dedicated actors. Instead, Fraser (along with actor Phil Brown, who played Uncle Owen) grounded Mark Hamill's Luke in a

family reality that seemed to exist in a different galaxy than the battles and set pieces that dominated the rest of the film.

While Beru (a role being played by Bonnie Plesse in *Episode II*) had few lines in *A New Hope*, her eyes did all the talking for her, letting the audience know that the maternal Beru is concerned about Luke's future—and hidden past. Her accomplishment is all the more remarkable since the actress did not then know as much about Luke's history as did the character she played.

A decade after *Star Wars*, Fraser appeared in *Hope and Glory*, a 1987 Oscar nominee for Best Picture. Among her other film credits were *The Witches*, *Staircase*, *A Touch of Love*, and the Finnish film *La Bas* (*Over There*). She was also a star of the popular British soap opera *Family of War* and appeared on the UK comedy series *A Touch of Frost*.

Born in the English town of Surrey, Fraser got her start on the London stage, appearing in such plays as *Peer Gynt*, *A Delicate Balance*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *The Clink*, and *Absolute Hell*, a 1995 hit that paired her with Dame Judi Dench. In addition, Fraser was

the author of the AIDS-themed play *The Day Ayrton Senna Died*.

But despite her lengthy list of credits, Fraser garnered most of her fans from her work in *Star Wars*. In a 1996 interview with *Star Wars Insider* (#32), Fraser said, "It's extraordinary—I keep getting these cards and letters from people. I've done a lot of things I think are really good, but all you have to do is mention you were in *Star Wars* and they look at you as though you've been knighted or something. Once you're in such an extraordinary situation, nothing is ever the same again." ☺



E.T. SPECIAL



AMERICAN GRAFFITI LEAVES ITS MARK ON COMEDY FESTIVAL

Where were you in '73? Well, if you were at the movies in 1973, chances are you were watching George Lucas' first blockbuster, *American Graffiti*, the seminal coming-of-age film with the poster asking, "Where were you in '62?" Nearly three decades after its release, *American Graffiti* is set to be honored as part of the American Film Institute's Favorite Film Series at the U.S. Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen, Colorado, this winter.

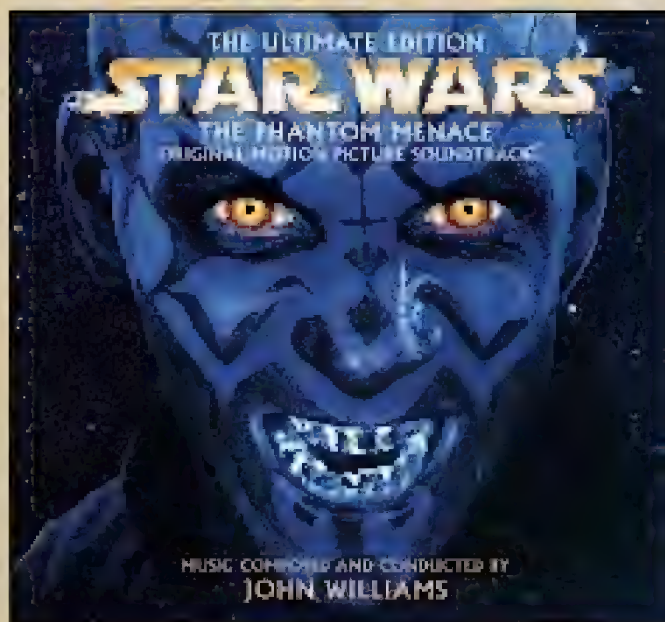
Lucas, the film's director and co-writer, will appear at the Feb. 29-March 5 event, along with co-writers Gloria Katz and Willard Huyck (the duo also contributed key dialogue to the original *Star Wars*) and members of the film's cast. Although no castmembers were confirmed at presstime, *Graffiti* launched the movie careers of Richard Dreyfuss, Harrison Ford, a grown-up Ron Howard, and several others, in a story based loosely on Lucas' youth in Modesto, California. (For more on the movie, see our retrospective in *Insider* #30, and our report from the 20th Anniversary tribute in *Insider* #40).

"I'm very happy to be participating in the U.S. Comedy Arts Festival's *American Graffiti* reunion," Lucas said. "The movie holds a special place in my heart next to my own memories of growing up in a small town in the 1950s. It's exciting that after all these years, *American Graffiti* is still around and still making people laugh." ☺

EPISODE I ULTIMATE SOUNDTRACK BLASTS OFF

Finally bowing to fan demand, Sony Classical has released an expanded version of the soundtrack to *The Phantom Menace*, featuring every note of John Williams' Episode I score—as well as one track that was recorded for the film but not used in the film's final cut.

When the first Episode I soundtrack was released in May, 1999, it quickly soared to double-platinum status and garnered a Grammy nomination—despite the fact that the single disc did not contain all of the music heard in the film. Now, with the release of the double-CD *Ultimate Edition*, fans finally have the chance to hear



Williams' entire score, uninterrupted, in the order it was heard in the movie.

The set also boasts two bonus tracks, including a special version of the popular *Duel of the Fates* featuring dialogue from the film. But the track sure to be most treasured is "Desert Winds," a sprightly tune originally intended to play between Anakin's first meeting with Padmé, and Jar Jar's encounter with Sebulba.

With the two extra pieces, *The Ultimate Edition* adds up to over 120 minutes of music spread over

two discs and 68 tracks. A 60-page booklet, lavishly illustrated with photographs for each track, is also included. As with prior *Star Wars* scores, John Williams conducts the London Symphony Orchestra.

The Ultimate Edition takes its place alongside the 1997 *Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition* soundtracks released by RCA Victor as the latest definitive *Star Wars* soundtrack, featuring every note from the Fox fanfare to the end credits. The blue-tinted Darth Maul cover art is pretty cool, too. ☺

EDITION TO PHONE HOME IN 2000

Will Fans Finally See the Lost Harrison Ford Scene?

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS Following in the footsteps of his friend and frequent collaborator George Lucas, Oscar-winning filmmaker Steven Spielberg will release a special "20th Anniversary Edition" of *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* in 2002.

Much like the *Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition* of 1997, the new *E.T.* will include computer-generated enhancements,

a digitally-remixed soundtrack, and what Universal Studios calls "never-before-seen" footage. The big question for *Star Wars* fans is whether that restored footage will include, as with the *Star Wars Special Edition*, a previously unseen sequence featuring Harrison Ford.

Although Ford did not appear in the final cut of the blockbuster, he filmed a short cameo as the

school principal to whom Elliot (Henry Thomas) is sent after freeing the frogs from biology class. A Universal representative told the *Insider* it had not yet been determined whether this scene would be re-inserted into the film. But it seems more likely than not that Spielberg would want to share this sequence with fans.

"E.T. is my most personal film," Spielberg said. "I always wanted

to give audiences another chance to experience it as they first did—in theaters, seeing it again, or—for the first time—seeing it with their own families. I also wanted to enhance that experience with advances in technology and some new footage."

The 20th Anniversary Edition of *E.T.* is due in theaters in March 2002—just two months before *Star Wars: Episode II*. ☺

STAR SIGHTINGS

Ford & Neeson Team for Submarine Thriller • McGregor & Lawson Join Forces for Rock Epic

by Dave Karger

» Han Solo, meet Qui-Gon Jinn. Well, not quite—but almost. The actors behind two of *Star Wars*' most beloved characters are set to bridge the gap between the classic and prequel trilogies, with **HARRISON FORD** and **LIAM NEESON** planning to appear together for the first time in the upcoming submarine thriller *K-11: The Widowmaker*.

The movie, produced by National Geographic Films, is based on the 1961 true story of Russia's first nuclear ballistic submarine. Ford stars as Captain Zateyev, who must join forces with his onboard adversary, second-in-command officer Yerin (Neeson), in a race against time to keep the sub's nuclear payload from a catastrophic meltdown. Kathryn Bigelow (*Strange Days*) will direct the high-powered duo.

In another exciting team-up, **EWAN MCGREGOR** (Obi-Wan Kenobi) will appear with his uncle, actor-director **DENIS LAWSON** (Wedge Antilles) in *The Sound of Fury*, the story of 1950s British rock star Billy Fury. The movie marks the second time McGregor (who stars as Fury) will sing in a movie, following the upcoming *Moulin Rouge*—and the first time the two *Star Wars* vets will appear in the same film. "It's something we've been trying to get together for a long time," McGregor told the online edition of *Empire* magazine. "Yes, we are going to act together." ... McGregor will also team with *Titanic* star Kate

Winslet in *East of Harlem* for director Jim Sheridan (*My Left Foot*) ...

SAMUEL L. JACKSON (Mace Windu) has chosen his next two films: *Changing Lanes*, the story of a chance auto accident that escalates to an all-out battle between Jackson and co-star Ben Affleck, and *Truck 44*, about firefighters who plan a heist that backfires—literally—on them. Jackson is also eyeing a starring role in *The Extractors*, an actioner for director John McTiernan (*Die Hard*) ...

HAYDEN CHRISTENSEN (Anakin Skywalker) takes on his first post-Episode II assignment, as Kevin Kline's rebellious son, in *Life as a House*, a dark comedy-drama directed by Rocky and Goodfellas producer Martin Winiker. ... **MARK HAMILL** (Luke Skywalker) played a corrupt detective on the E! anthology series *Hollywood Offramp* and joined Annette Bening, Rene Auberjonois, and others for a National Public Radio presentation of *The Wizard of Oz*. ... In addition, Hamill has signed on as chief content officer for the sci-fi and horror Web site *FragCity.com*. The site, renamed Mark Hamill Presents *FragCity*, features original animation and sci-fi/horror movies.

CARRIE FISHER (Princess Leia), who appeared recently on the HBO hit *Sex and the City*, is one of the stars (along with Sandra Bullock and Spike Lee) who put in cameo appearances in *Famous*, the new film from

actor/director Griffin Dunne (*Addicted to Love*). ... **PERNILLA AUGUST** (Shmi Skywalker) stars in the Swedish film *Gossig* and the Danish film *Annu*.

BILLY DEE WILLIAMS (Lando Calrissian) stars in the thriller *Good Neighbor* alongside Wander Years sweetheart Danica McKellar. ... Williams also recently received the lifetime achievement award from the Multicultural Motion Picture Association. ... Harrison Ford received the Award for Leadership from the human rights organization Amnesty International USA.

JOHN HOLLIS (Lobot) appeared in the European biblical drama *Esther*, which also featured Oscar winner F. Murray Abraham (*Amadeus*). ... **GARRICK HAGON** (Biggs Darklighter) appears with Forest Whitaker and Jeremy Irons in the British thriller *The Fourth Angel*. ... **SUSIE PORTER** (a waitress in Episode III) stars in the Australian feature *The Mosby's Mask*. ...

KEIRA KNIGHTLEY (Sabé) takes on her first starring role in the British film *After the Hole*. She also appeared with **LINDSAY DUNCAN** (the voice of TC-14) in the PBS version of Dickens' *Oliver Twist*. ... **BRONOGH CALLAGHER** (Episode I's Republic Cruiser Captain) appears in the British film *Wild About Harry*. ... **RENA OWEN** (Episode II) will appear in the independent thriller *Soul Assassin* and in Steven Spielberg's sci-fi epic *A.I.*

PHIL TIPPETT, a special

effects artist on all three original *Star Wars* films, will make his directorial debut on the sci-fi epic *Ringworld*, based on Larry Niven's bestselling novels; at the same time, his Trippett Studios (*Hollow Man*) will create visual effects for the sci-fi comedy *Evolution*, directed by Ivan Reitman (*Ghostbusters*, *Six Days Seven Nights*) and starring *X-Files*' David Duchovny. ... Saga composer **JOHN WILLIAMS** will score the first *Harry Potter* movie, as well as Steven Spielberg's sci-fi adventure *Minority Report*, starring Tom Cruise.

Empire Strikes Back cinematographer **PETER SUSCHITZKY** was director of photography on the Val Kilmer/**TERENCE STAMP** (*Valorum*) vehicle *Red Planet*. ... **CHRIS HENGES**, who served under Suschitzky as second unit cameraman on *Empire*, is director of photography on *The Pledge*, starring Jack Nicholson and directed by Sean Penn.

Return of the Jedi producer **HOWARD KAZANJIAN** serves as executive producer for the extreme sports adventure *Extreme Days* and the Clons Leachman drama *The Amari Girls*. ... **PAUL DINI** (a writer for the animated *Droids* series) moves into live-action as screenwriter of *Million Dollar Hero* and, with co-writer Alan Burnett, *Batman Beyond*—a possible big-screen adaptation of the animated series, to be directed by Boaz Yakin (*Remember the Titans*). ☐

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**NOTHING
BUT...
STAR WARS!**



TATOOINE THUNDER MACHINES

LANDSPEEDERS FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

BY JON BRADLEY SNYDER

FOR THIS EDITION of Nothing But Star Wars, we invited Chris Holoka, creator of www.toshistation.com, to share some of his customized landspeeders with us. You can find more on his web site, but first, fasten your seatbelt and let Chris explain the finer points of customized speeder technology.

It's a special breed of machine that allows for safe and speedy travel under the twin suns of Tatooine. Harsh and often dangerous wasteland conditions call for transportation that will be able to deliver equal parts speed and reliability. Enter the landspeeder. These versatile hot rods come in a wide variety of shapes and styles, from the functional to the fast. Here is an abbreviated introduction to some of the speeders commonly found gliding across the baked floor of our favorite desert planet.



Kuan MFP 4073 KMRocket

For the farm-boy who wouldn't mind riding a krayt dragon if someone would only put wheels on it. The Kuan KMRocket sports a double compliment of rear-repulsor banks and twin G2241 Commando Thrust turbines.

While not the most common vehicle on the desert, the KMRocket is a popular choice among the younger, speed-craving Tatooine hot rod set.

The first time you put the pedal to the floor on this beast you'll be impressed and alarmed by the sheer magnitude of the power unleashed. Even the most nimble Tusken snipers won't be able to keep a bead on this high-performance boat.

The KMRocket offers a full (human) body harness for the driver seat and extra wide Safe-T-Grip treads to ensure you remain firmly planted on the desert floor—even at the considerable cruising speeds those Commando turbines will insist upon.



SoroSuub X-1031 Sport Speeder

Three turbines, convertible top, and classic good looks are all factory-standard on this mean machine. Whether racing through Beggar's Canyon or taking that leisurely Sunday cruise through downtown Mos Espa, the X-1031 Convertible Sport Speeder will ensure you get there in style.

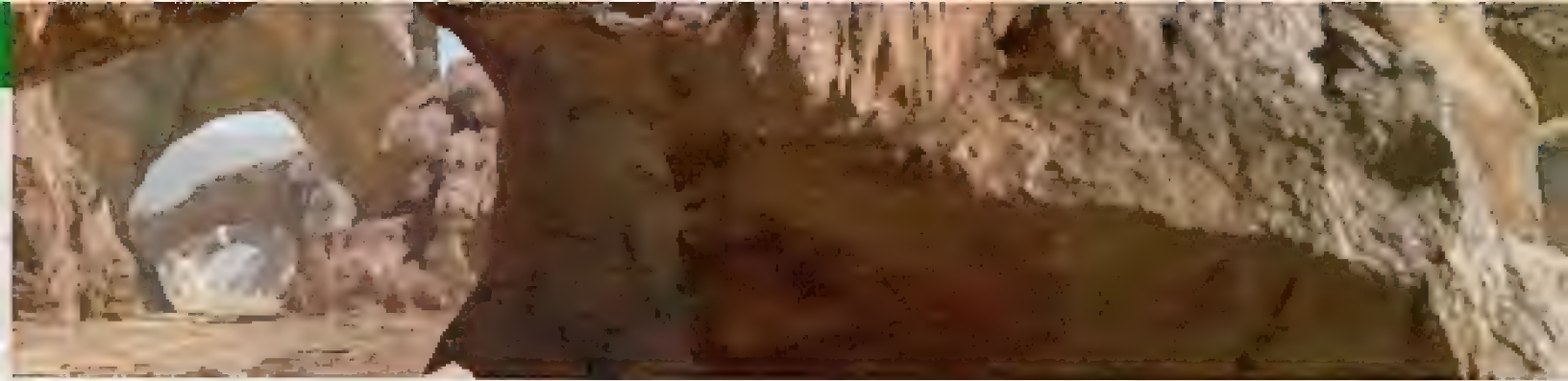
The X-1031 has been in production for nearly six seasons and has proven to be a very popular choice for the racing enthusiast on a moisture-farmer budget.

SoroSuub Mark-V Luxury Town and Country Wagon

Featuring lavish wood paneling and copious amounts of luggage space, the Mark-V Luxury Wagon has proven to be a staple of many large family garages. Powered by a Patel Ironworks T-Cat power plant (ideal for towing), the Mark-V Wagon offers enough seating for an entire Jawa clan, with cup holders to spare. Multi-spectrum headlamps will ensure you spot that moonlit roadside bantha way before he spots you.

You'll find the Mark-V is a typical Tatooine family vehicle—reliably built and sensibly priced.





Falfa Custom GR1-d3 Cruiser

No one ever said out-running Imperial skimmers was easy (or recommended), but if you happen to find yourself on the wrong side of the Empire, you can relax if you're behind



Wise AC-R3 Dust Devil

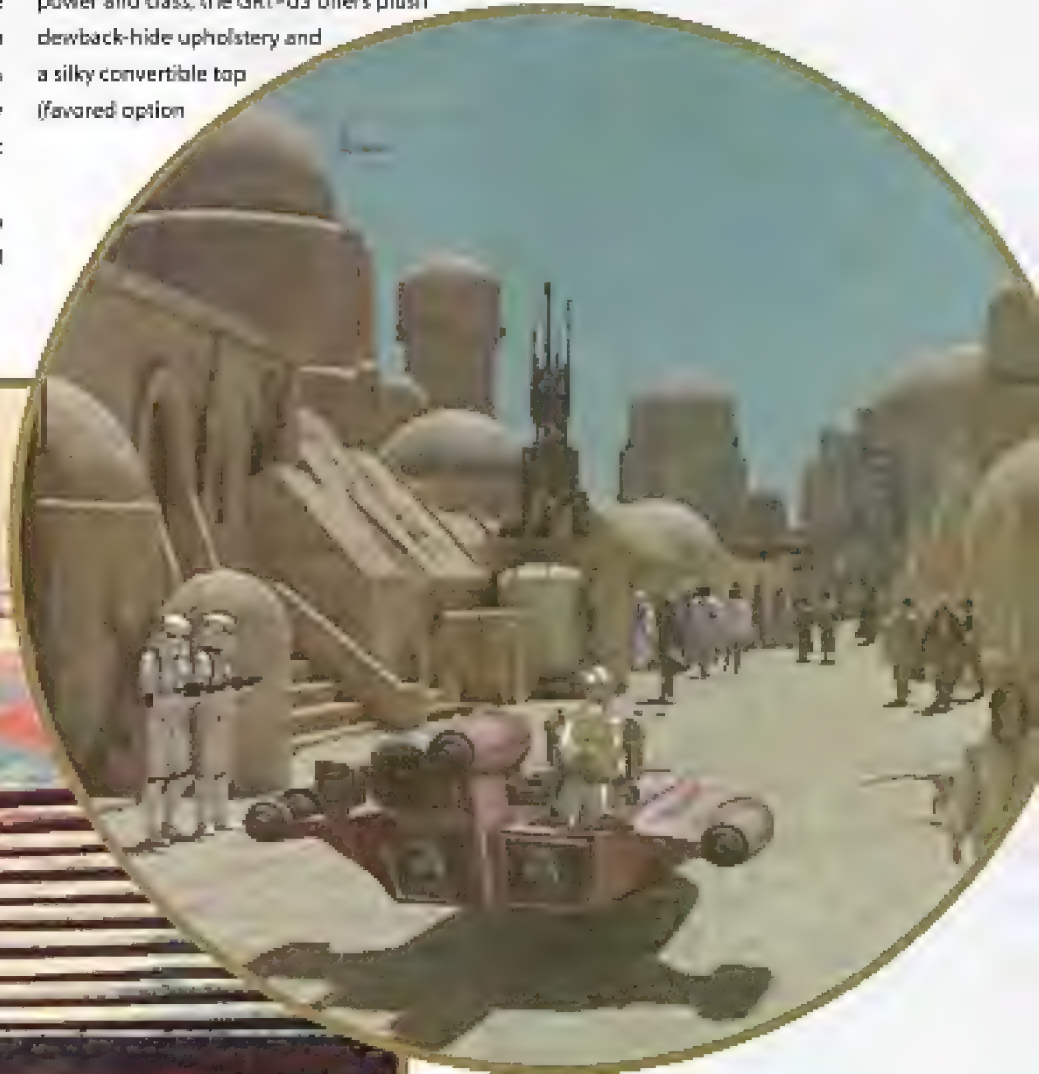
Sporting an optional Formula Three Super-Duty Turbine package, the Dust Devil dishes out more than enough raw power to out-race your friends or elude the most impetuous Imperial patrol. Optional electric blue engine cowl and high-gloss finish will move you across the Jundland Wastes in refined style. A muscular under-hood presence and a variety of optional paint schemes keep the Dust Devil in high demand.

This "gentleman's hot rod" is better known as last season's official skimmer at the Royal Tatooine Racing League.

the wheel of the GR1-d3 Cruiser. Beefy 455 big-block repulsor lift engines kept aloft by a sturdy Easy-Glide chassis allow you to beat the hastiest retreat.

Striking the cosmic balance between power and class, the GR1-d3 offers plush dewback-hide upholstery and a silky convertible top (favored option

among the Twi'lek ladies). After a hard day working the moisture vaporators there is no better way to cool down than a relaxing evening ride with only the stars above. ☺



GEORGE

GEORGE LUCAS

"THE STORY COMES FIRST"

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW FROM
THE SET OF *STAR WARS: EPISODE II*

BY SCOTT CHERNOFF

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—Natalie Portman and Hayden Christensen are in the middle of filming one of their most crucial scenes together in *Star Wars: Episode II*. It is a moment charged with emotion, crackling with drama, and certain to have a profound impact on the course of the *Star Wars* saga.

As the actors deliver their dialogue, crew members on the cavernous Stage 4 of the Fox Studios Australia lot stand silent, not only out of respect for the actors but also in an effort to hear their words, which are being spoken barely above a whisper. Besides, everyone—from the actors speaking to the boom operator holding a microphone above them just out of camera view—is here to do a job, and each person is focused entirely on getting their contribution to the process right.

But no one here on this August afternoon is focused as intensely, or on more things at once, than the director, George Lucas. Sitting in front of two enormous digital monitors that are relaying the images captured from two simultaneously-running digital cameras, surrounded by the three different sets that currently fill Stage 4, and flanked by producer Rick McCallum and other key members of his production team on all sides of him, Lucas must keep track of both of the camera angles and every detail within them, as well as digital details to be added later, without losing sight of the quality of the performances in this important, story-driven scene.

It's a lot to ask of any director, but if George Lucas is feeling the pressure, you wouldn't know it. Appearing relaxed in his trademark jeans and flannel shirt, Lucas is clearly serious

about the work taking place but seems confident in the direction the movie is moving and delighted to see so many different elements coming together. If there is anything to worry about, it might be that there is an enormous starship, to be used in a scene that has yet to be shot, safely secured by cables but nonetheless hovering directly above Lucas' chair.

But under the shadow of both the huge prop and the huge expectations that accompany any new *Star Wars* film, Lucas is secure. Thanks to the stringent safety standards observed by the Lucasfilm crew, there is no real danger that the ship will fall. And as for those expectations, Lucas is protected by the knowledge that he is merely telling the story that he started back in 1977, and no matter what critics think of it, he is happy to be telling his story, his way.

GEORGE—

I CAN'T TAKE A STORY THAT'S BASICALLY VERY, VERY

E LU CAS



[FACING] Director George Lucas addresses his actors. [ABOVE] Hayden Christensen and Natalie Portman take direction from George Lucas on the set of a Naboo starship in *Star Wars: Episode II*. [BOTTOM RIGHT] Podmé (actress Natalie Portman) strikes a contemplative pose. Photos by Sue Adler.

"Cut," Lucas says without shouting. "Great."

The take, indeed, was great, but Lucas nevertheless rises from his chair and walks over to his actors, conferring privately for a few moments about the emotions of the scene. Then he returns to his chair, and once again says, "Action." This time, Portman and Christensen speak with a renewed sense of urgency, raising the stakes of the scene by the way they now say their lines. This time, the take was even better than the last time.

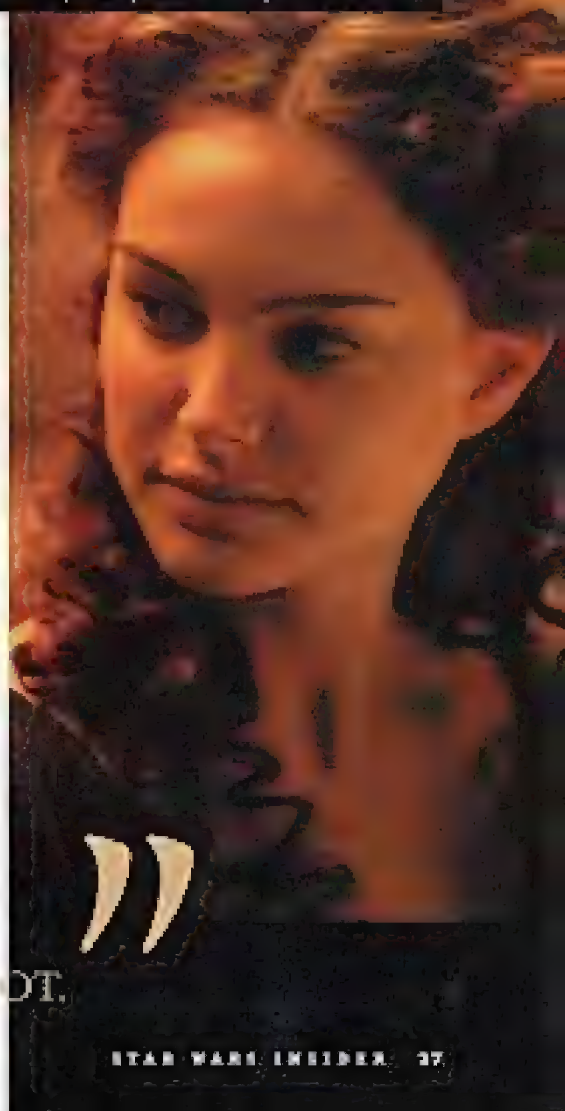
"Cut," Lucas says again. "That was great."

Over the course of three days on the Sydney set of Episode II, *Star Wars Insider* saw this same dynamic play out again and again: Lucas quietly watching, and then getting up after every take to talk to the performers and technicians bringing his saga to life. The takes get better and better, until—usually sooner than you'd expect—Lucas is satisfied, knowing the scene will not grow any further, and says, "Great, let's move on," before quickly setting up the next shot and starting the process again.

With principal photography barely a month underway, Episode II was shaping up as even more of a logistical challenge than Episode I. But Lucas not only kept his cool, he found the time to sit down for a brief interview with the *Insider* in between takes of the Portman-Christensen scene. Along with representatives from the official *Star Wars* magazines in France, England, Germany, and Spain, we were the only journalists allowed on the set of Episode II during its entire production, and after watching Lucas work for the past three days, we had plenty of questions—but very little time to ask them. After all, there was a lot more work to do, and Lucas knows when it's time to move on.

It looks like this film is going to be a big darker in tone and atmosphere than Episode I.

It's definitely getting a little bit more intense. The next one will probably be the darkest of all of them. Ultimately, I have to tell a story. So the story comes first. And I can't really play it



RY DARK AND MAKE IT HAPPY BECAUSE IT'S NOT.



A massive set under construction on a soundstage at Fox Studios Australia will soon become a Coruscant hot spot. Photo by Giles Westley.

to an audience. I mean the story is what the story is. I knew that it was going to go very dark. You know, it may not be very successful when I get down that dark. But, you know, at least the thing will be finished and it will have been good to me. There's not much I can do about. I can't take a story that's basically very, very dark and make it happy. Because it's not.

So you don't have that commercial thought on your head that this has to be a big hit?

This has never been a commercial idea. It's been one that nobody wanted to do, and it was hard to get it done, and everybody thought I was nuts. The fact that it has become commercial is sort of a separate thing that defies description. So I can't really play to that. And I don't really have to.

Does it surprise you how popular Star Wars became?

Yes. I mean it's pretty amazing. But when you're in the epicenter of something like that, you're not really as aware of it as most people. Take my children, or the children of any famous person. I'm just dad. And that's no big deal. And there's nothing to it, you know, because he's just a regular guy and he gets mad at me sometimes and he does stupid things sometimes and we go fishing sometimes. And it's

the same thing with the Star Wars movies.

I've never seen the movies as any kind of phenomenon because I have to live with them and work with them and they're just another movie that I make. It's no harder or easier than anything else I do. It's just that they became really popular for whatever reason while something else didn't. But I like all the movies I make, and I put just as much work into all of them. And it's hard to tell why some of them really become popular and some of them don't. I mean I know the basic rules, yet when something like Star Wars becomes such an incredible phenomenon there's no way to explain it.

In Episode II, we're going to deal with the mechanics of the Clone Wars. I wonder how important that theme is to you and all the cloning that's going on now, such as the cloned troopers to help Anakin fight. Does all that play into your thinking about the theme?

No, because the cloning theme was developed 30 years ago, so the fact that it's going to end up in this movie is just part of the inevitability of things. But I don't have a really strong feeling one way or the other about it.

So much of the Star Wars story is so much old from your last decade. How much, if at all, do you allow yourself to develop new material, and

how much do you want to stick to your original ideas?

For the basic story, I pretty much stick to my original ideas. But the story was very thin. It was basically just the plot. How it happens, the scenes, and all of the ramifications go into the script after you come up with the outline. So there's a lot of room to think. Lots of changes, although the essence stays the same. And I've kept the style of all the movies the same so that it works as one piece.

We know that Anakin has a complex backstory. What about other characters throughout the saga? How important is it to give them such a backstory?

I've said this a few times, but it's a complex idea that's hard to get across. I'm approaching these films, for better or worse, like a symphony. I have a lot of themes that I keep repeating over and over again through the whole thing. Different notes and different instrumentation, but when you see all six movies together you'll see that there's a lot of recurring notes being played. Sometimes they're played with the oboe, and sometimes they're played with the violin, and sometimes they're played with a full orchestra. And it's done on purpose. And it's also done in different facets. It's something I toyed with in my very first film, THX, which is to take various ideas and show different aspects of them, but out of context.



I'M APPROACHING THESE FILMS, FOR BETTER OR WORSE, LIKE OVER AND OVER AGAIN. I

It's hard to explain exactly how that works, but it's like painting different views of the same thing and putting them on the same piece of paper...a sort of Cubist idea. But in this particular saga, it's a much more symphonic idea. So it's an idea of having themes that go through, and you're telling a big story and you use these themes over and over again. So you're going to find that there's a lot of similarity between what Anakin goes through and what Luke goes through. They follow the same path. And it's a similar situation with some of the other characters, such as Boba Fett.

I've heard people talking about how reminiscent of Vader he is, how good-looking, or his great qualities. Is that a fair assessment?
I wouldn't say that's true. He's cursed by the same flaws, and issues that he has to overcome, that all humans are cursed with. There's a lot going on there.

It must be a real challenge to find

hope. The transformation from the handsome apprentice to the Darth Vader that we know is subtle, is it?

The whole point is—and the reason I started the story where I did—is that Anakin is a normal, good kid. And how does somebody who is normal and good turn bad? What are the qualities, what is it that we all have within us that will turn us bad?

What made you choose Jonathan Nolan as your collaborator for the screenplay?
I'd worked with him on *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, and knew him really well and knew his work. So it was very easy for me to work with him again during the writing process, and then turn it over to him to do the rewrite.

It seems to have become a pressing job more on the set that the script came in very close to the start of filming. Were you writing scenes as the location approached?

The last couple of weeks I started to get a little concerned about it. But basically I had a draft and then I started doing the rewrite on the draft. And I finished that rewrite. But as I was doing it, I worked with Jonathan to do a third rewrite on the draft, and then I combined them all. The real issue was trying to get them all finished before we started shooting. A lot of people don't finish their scripts before they start shooting.

On the original *Star Wars* I was about three weeks into production before I finished the script. On the other ones, I've pretty much finished beforehand. It's not unusual to go into a film and not have the script finished. But I had most of the things laid out, everybody kind of knew what they were doing, and it didn't really affect the production that much.

One of your biggest moments was the killing of Anakin Skywalker. How did you direct an action sequence like that?



George Lucas and Visual Effects Supervisor John Knoll discuss the shooting of a scene in Padmé's apartment on Coruscant. Photo by Sue Adler.

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SYMPHONY. I HAVE A LOT OF THEMIS THAT I KEEP REPEATING
OUGH THE WHOLE THING.

Well, Hayden is the newest kid on the block, so to speak. And Robin Gurland did a lot of interviewing to find somebody. And then I tested some actors with Natalie and we saw his range and what his qualities were. And ultimately, with these kinds of things, you throw a dart at the board and say that's the one, when it comes down to the last one or two, unless somebody really jumps out and is perfect for it. But usually when you're dealing with young actors it's not quite that easy. You know, it's a hard decision to make. I've had young actors in almost all my movies and sometimes you do better than others. But I think Hayden is a very talented actor, and I think he's doing a great job. He's going to be very good.

How does your track of casting Christopher Lee?

He's different in this film. It's a different kind of approach to the whole thing. And I really wanted to get as far away as I could from a certain tradition that had been created. I wanted to get back to the kind of character and actor like I had in the first film, someone played by Peter Cushing. And Christopher Lee is so perfect because he's the gentleman, he's the aristocrat, he's perfect for the part and lets us be subtle.

How is production going on set?

It's going very well. We're chugging along. It's intense every day, it always is. Anybody that has deadlines to meet understands; you have a deadline every single day. Every day you've got to get your work done. Otherwise you fall behind and it's so big that you can't really afford to fall behind. So you somehow have to get it done every day. And every day we come across all kinds of challenges; there's one thing or another, there's always something thrown in our path that we have to work on to keep ourselves on schedule, to keep the work looking good. But so far we've managed it. We've got four more weeks here.

You used to be having a lot of trouble on the set. Are you enjoying directing this year again—was that part of the original plan?

Well the first one 22 years ago was very hard, because it was done under very difficult conditions. I had a very short schedule. I had sort of a rebellious crew and there was a lot of things that weren't working right on that film. And so it was very difficult to do it. I was under a lot of pressure every single day to get it done. And the budget was minuscule for a movie like that. But since that film, I've never really had that problem. Since then I've kind of enjoyed the process. When I produce films

I make sure that the process that we put together is adequate, and the support for the director is there—just because I went through a couple of films where it wasn't. And that was very painful. And now that I've been back and I've got a lot of support, a lot of very talented people, and a lot of very good crew and everybody is working really hard, and so it's a lot more enjoyable. And I don't have a studio breathing down my neck, which makes a big difference too.

Was there anything you learned in making Episode I that has helped you on Episode II?

When we started Episode I we didn't really know too much about how we were going to handle the whole digital reality we created. We'd done a lot of experiments on previous films and the TV series, but this was the first time we'd really done a full-out production: taking all the theories that we'd worked out and put them into a practical situation. So I learned an enormous amount on that picture. I'm using all of that on this picture, and I'm getting fairly comfortable with making films in this new kind of way where you only have partial sets, and knowing where the technology is and what you can do and what you can't do. It's a learning process. Just like learning to make movies is a process, learning to get to this level is a process too.

How much of the film will you be shooting live action, and how much is going to be CGI?

It's probably about the same as the last film. I would say the last film was maybe 2/3 live action, 1/3 animated. It's hard to tell, because it was 90% digital, meaning that 90% of the film had actually gone through a computer and something had been done to it: either full-blown animation, or a digital set or some small piece. So it's very hard to say; on one level you could say it was 90% fabricated and only 10% real. But the problem with these kinds of movies is that you have to shoot 100% of a live action movie, and then you have to shoot 100% of an animated film. You have to do it twice.

Production Designer Gavin Bocquet, Set Decorator Peter Wolpole, Art Director Jonathan Lee and Director George Lucas discuss details of a new set to be built on an Australian soundstage. Photo by Sue Adler.



THE WHOLE POINT IS—AND THE REASON I STARTED WHERE I DO IS SOMEBODY WHO IS N



George Lucas speaks with Ewan McGregor (who portrays Obi-Wan Kenobi) and Samuel L. Jackson (who portrays Mace Windu). Photo by Lisa Tomasetti.

freedom. The technology... gives you a lot of freedom... a lot of freedom.

I started out as an editor. So I'm naturally in the mode of making films in the editing room. That's where I like to do it, that's where it really comes together and you can see it as a film. Before that, you're just gathering material or working off ideas, but you're not actually seeing the real, kinetic event take place. So I do a lot of my work in the editing room. And I really designed this whole process, designed the non-linear digital editing, so that I could do this kind of thing, and then expanded it into doing a lot of 3-D animation sets and similar things. It's being able to manipulate the images to a much greater degree than you could in the old editing process. And that's all really designed so that I can massage the film, over and over again, as an artist would do with a painting or with a sculpture. You can actually work with it, and

step back and look at it, and work with it some more. It's not like drawing up a set of blueprints and then sending it off to the factory to be manufactured, which is the way a lot of movies are made.

Does that freedom ever make it hard to make a decision?

No. Somebody once said, "What does a director do? And how does a director know what's right?" And I said, "If you don't know what's right, you're not a director." You know, I have to make two or three hundred decisions every day. And each one of those decisions is crucial to the film. If I make a mistake it will always be there, and it could tumble the movie. And sometimes I make good mistakes, and sometimes I make bad mistakes. A friend of mine, who is a filmmaker and an editor, said that the ratio is that one bad mistake or one bad idea will eat up 100 good ideas. So if you have one bad idea in a film, it really does

suck up a lot of your good ideas.

There's another theory that in every frame of film there's 1,000 ideas. So you only need a few bad ideas to make the whole thing tumble. But it takes a lot of good ideas. So you have to push very hard and put in a lot of good stuff, and hopefully you can do more of that than the bad stuff because the bad stuff will tear you down. Whenever you're working on something, you're really close to it, and it's very hard sometimes to see it the way other people see it who are fresh to it. By the time you figure that out, it's too late. By the time you preview it and show it to people, and there are really major issues that you may have been myopic about, they are way beyond repair. Which is why there are so many bad movies made. If it was easy, I guess we wouldn't have any bad movies.

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I DID—IS THAT ANAKIN IS A NORMAL GOOD KID, AND HOW JOURNAL AND GOOD TURN BAD?



George Lucas sets up a shot with the Sony 24p digital camera on location at Lake Como, Italy. Photo by Lisa Tomasciti.

...do you have with new digital cameras going at twice as fast as film cameras?

No, I've always shot with two cameras.

You're going to have two big monitors in front of you and you're got to kind of keep your eyes on both of them. Isn't that difficult?

No, because I've done it over the years. When I first started we didn't have video monitors, so I just had to set the cameras and hope that they were getting what I was asking them to get. But then I didn't have *Star Wars* either. It wasn't really until after *Star Wars* that video monitors became a reality. And from then on you could actually see what was going on, but not very well. Now, with these new systems, you can actually see...it's like looking at dailies. The big monitors aren't really that accurate in terms of the final image. You have to go into the back part of the stage where the Director of Photography is in a black booth where you can actually look at the really high quality monitors to see what the color really looks like.

I can see the images and the acting and the monitors are usually cranked up really bright so I can see everything that's going on rather than the actual dark image that's being photographed. In a lot of cases we'll be shooting

night scenes now; the images on the TV look like day but back in the other room they're all night, and very moody. I pretty much know what I'm after. So I'm looking over here for this piece and over there for that piece. And I'm going back and making sure that I get the right pieces that I need for the right shots. And at the same time I'm following the performance. And so you do a few takes, and you're making sure all the pieces fall together. And after a while you get used to it.

A lot of directors, like Richard Lester, sometimes use three or four cameras. Kurosawa used seven cameras at a time. Some people only like to use one. On the first *Star Wars* I shot it mostly with one camera. Two cameras once in a while, but the DP and I had a big dispute about the whole thing, so I was forced to do it not the way I'm used to working.

Were your expectations for the digital work met on Episode II? Could you visualize all what you wanted to do? Yes. For the first time I really could manipulate the film...and more than I even imagined I could. So actually my expectations were sort of here, at one level, say 60. And I got way past 60, I got to like 80 and I realized that I was even on the wrong scale. There was like a scale of 500. There wasn't a scale of 100. I could really

go all the way up. The whole parameters have changed.

So you're obviously going further than on Episode II?

A lot of the digital thing is technical. A lot of it just has to do with the way you make movies. It's the difference between sketching with a quill pen and sketching with a nice felt tip. They're just two different technologies. And in a lot of cases, one is easier to work with. And with one you have to be really careful and slower and the other one is more fluid and you can think faster. So it's really not as dramatic as the introduction of sound was, or color in terms of the image and what you get from it. It just means that you're more facile in the way you can work.

The example I've always used is it's like the transition from when art went from fresco painting into oil painting, with the invention of oils. With fresco painting, you had to put the plaster on the wall and paint it that day. You had to do it in a certain way so that, on the next day, you could put another piece of plaster on and make it match in; you had to disguise the fact that part was painted one day and more the next day. And you had to mix the colors and they would dry completely differently from the way you mixed them. You really had to understand a lot of intuitive things and you depended on a very large crew: your color mixers and the people working on the scaffolding, all kinds of people—it was a huge crew to do frescoes.

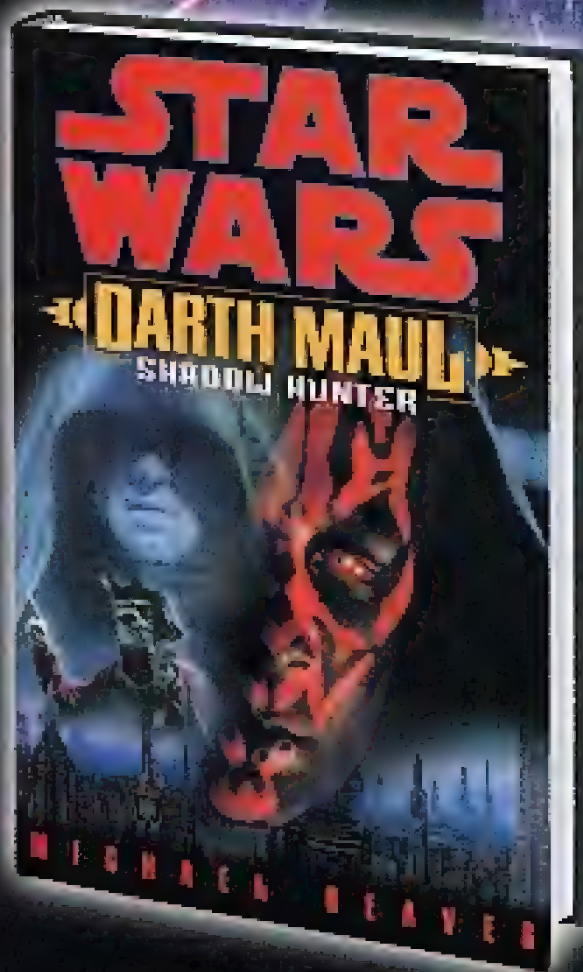
Whereas with oil paintings, artists could go out all by themselves, mix their own colors, whatever color they mixed was what the color was going to be when it would dry. And you could blend the colors more easily. You could stop, come back the next day and pick it up where you left off. And that's really what's happened with digital technology. It's really like going from frescoes to oils.

[At this point, Lucasfilm's Lynne Hale approaches Lucas and says, "The set is calling—they're ready for you."]

Thank you for your time, George. Well, I guess we could carry this on forever. I'm sorry it was so short. Thanks. ☺

—Patrice Girard, Brian Robb, and Oliver Denker contributed to this interview.

BEFORE DARTH VADER, HE WAS THE
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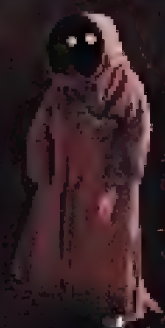
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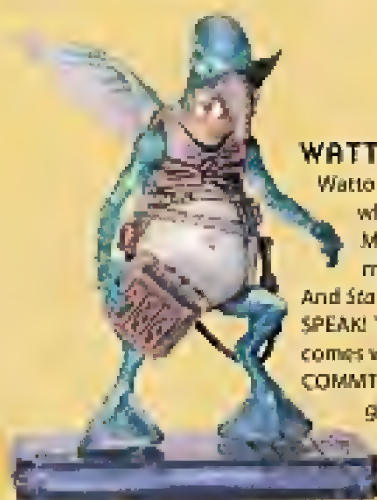
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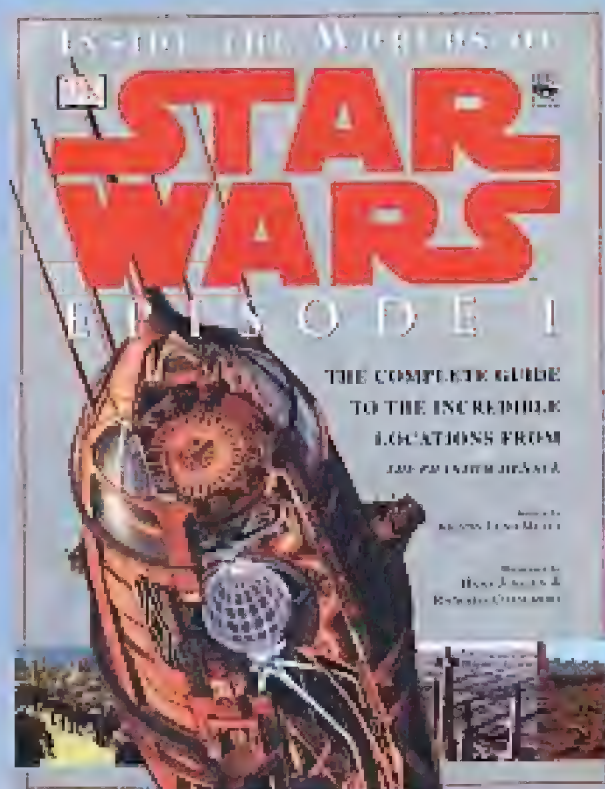
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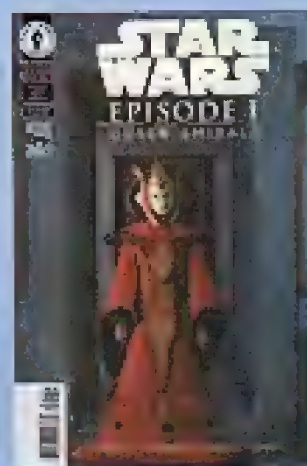




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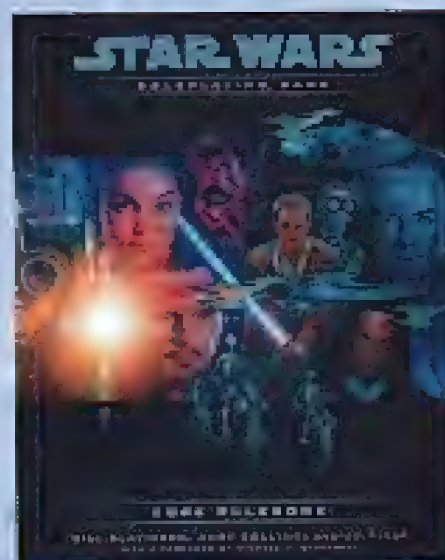
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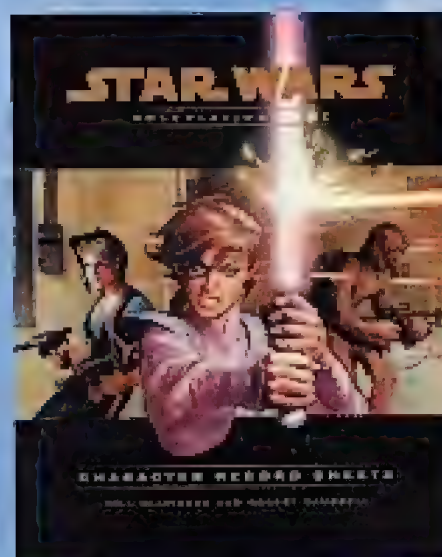
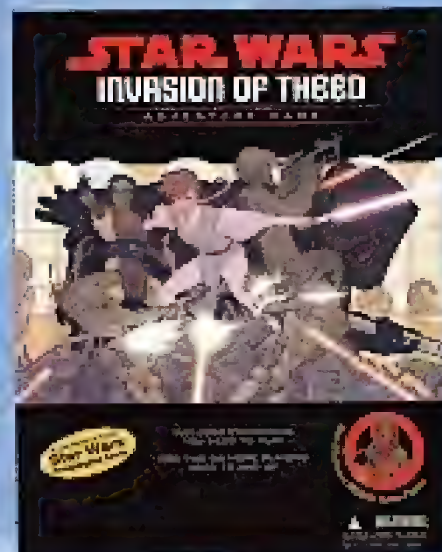
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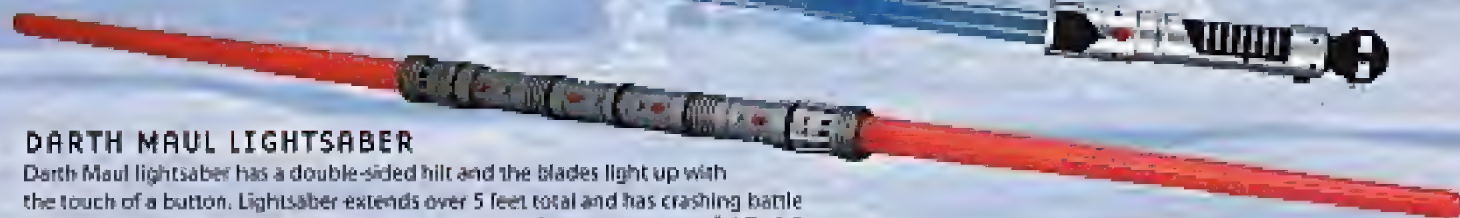
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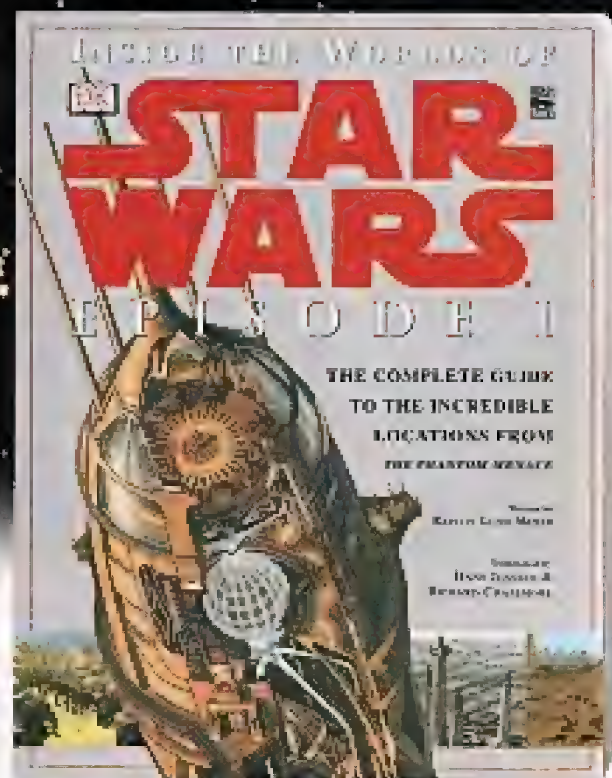
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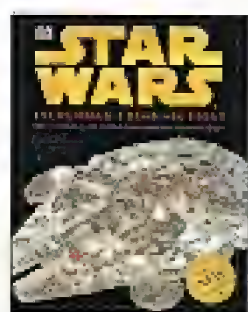


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CASTING DIRECTOR

ROBIN GURLAND

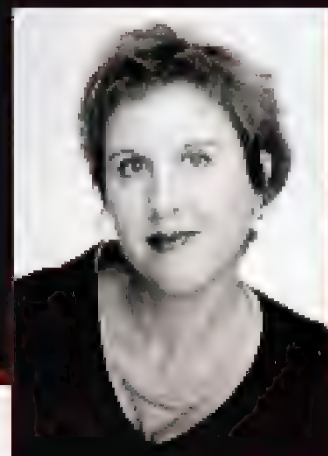


Photo by Keith Hunsfere

The following interview with Casting Director Robin Gurland was conducted at her office at Fox Studios Australia, in Sydney, at the beginning of August.

Coming down to Australia must have been a whole new experience for you in terms of the talent pool. Or was it?

I'm used to it now. I did it in London, so now it's old hat. But it's wonderful to come here, because you come in with no preconceived notions, no rules that you have to deal with this person or that one, no rigid relationships. Actually, it's a challenge to ramp up to speed and to get to know the talent, but once you do, it's lovely. It's all new territory for us.

How long did it take you to get acclimated?

When we first decided to come here is when I really started to scour Australian films at places like Sundance and other festivals. So I did a lot of pre-work. And then when I came here I went right to theatres and saw who was who. Again, it's a lot like London where people were working theatre as well as telly and film. And so it's a wonderful chance to see the talent pool and not have to rely just on film and agent recommendations, which is very subjective to say the least. And so I came down and I started going to theatre and took off from there. It's a smaller talent core, of course, not as extensive as London and not as huge as the U.S.

Is there anyone in particular that you saw in a play and hadn't heard about?

Much of my cast. Leanna Walsman and Ronald Falk and Susie Porter, who I also saw at the film festival. Anthony Phelan was theatre. So yes, a good portion.

How much emphasis do you put on theater skills when casting for film?

To me they're transferable. A good actor is a good actor. It's a little tricky if you have someone who has never worked in film before. But that goes across the board, theatre or not. But as long as someone has been familiar with film, with blocking and all that. It's just a matter of tweaking different muscles. Especially for a movie like this, because often these roles offer gorgeous little vignettes that are very compact and really stand on their own. And a person who is used to working in the medium of theatre is very used to creating art quickly, and being able to use dialogue in a very compact way. And it translates nicely.

I was really struck by the resemblance of Joel Edgerton to Phil Brown as Owen Lars, and I under-

stand Joel actually is one of the more well known Australian actors. How did you cast him in terms of getting a physical match as well as a good actor?

Well I was certainly looking for a physical match as well as someone who could act. But Joel's parents have to take the credit for the former, not me—but boy I was lucky! It's frightening how close they are in appearance. And he's such a strong actor, so that's a real plus. He's a real up and coming actor in Australia.

How did you go about making that physical match, sort of getting a Phil Brown look, but 30, 40 years younger?

Facial structure, mainly. I mean he has very definite eye shape, cheek shape, the basic face shape. That's what I used. I pulled out all of the photos of Phil and kind of used that as a reference point for a match. And obviously skin tone and eye coloring.

And do you send those parameters out to agents?

No. Most people came to see me blind. They don't have a clue.

"OFTEN THESE ROLES OFFER GORGEOUS LITTLE VIGNETTES THAT ARE VERY COMPACT AND REALLY STAND ON THEIR OWN."

—BOB D'AMICO



[ABOVE] Veiled in mystery, a lady of Coruscant and her escorts face the camera head-on. Photo by Sue Adler. [BELOW] Actor Joel Edgerton portrays Owen Lars in *Star Wars: Episode III*. [INSET] Phil Brown as Owen Lars in the original *Star Wars* movie.

But in terms of the actors, when you're actually looking for a match, there was someone you found in a theatre and you went, "Hey looks like a young Phil Brown?"

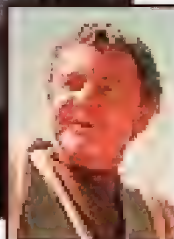
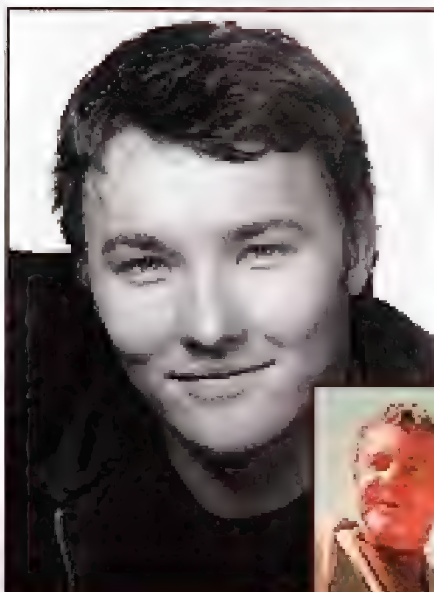
No, it's just looking through the book. Just like in the States and in London, they have what's called here Show Pass, a book of head shots. And I literally just look through and find head shots that look as if they could be right. And then I get a video tape and bring the actor in if he seems right.

It would have been disappointing if you saw him and then found out that he couldn't act.

It would. Luckily that wasn't the case. But for any matching role you have to see at least 10 or 15 people. It's not only the actor getting hold of the character, but the physical match on top of that. So it just increases the amount of people that you have to see.

How about the Beru role?

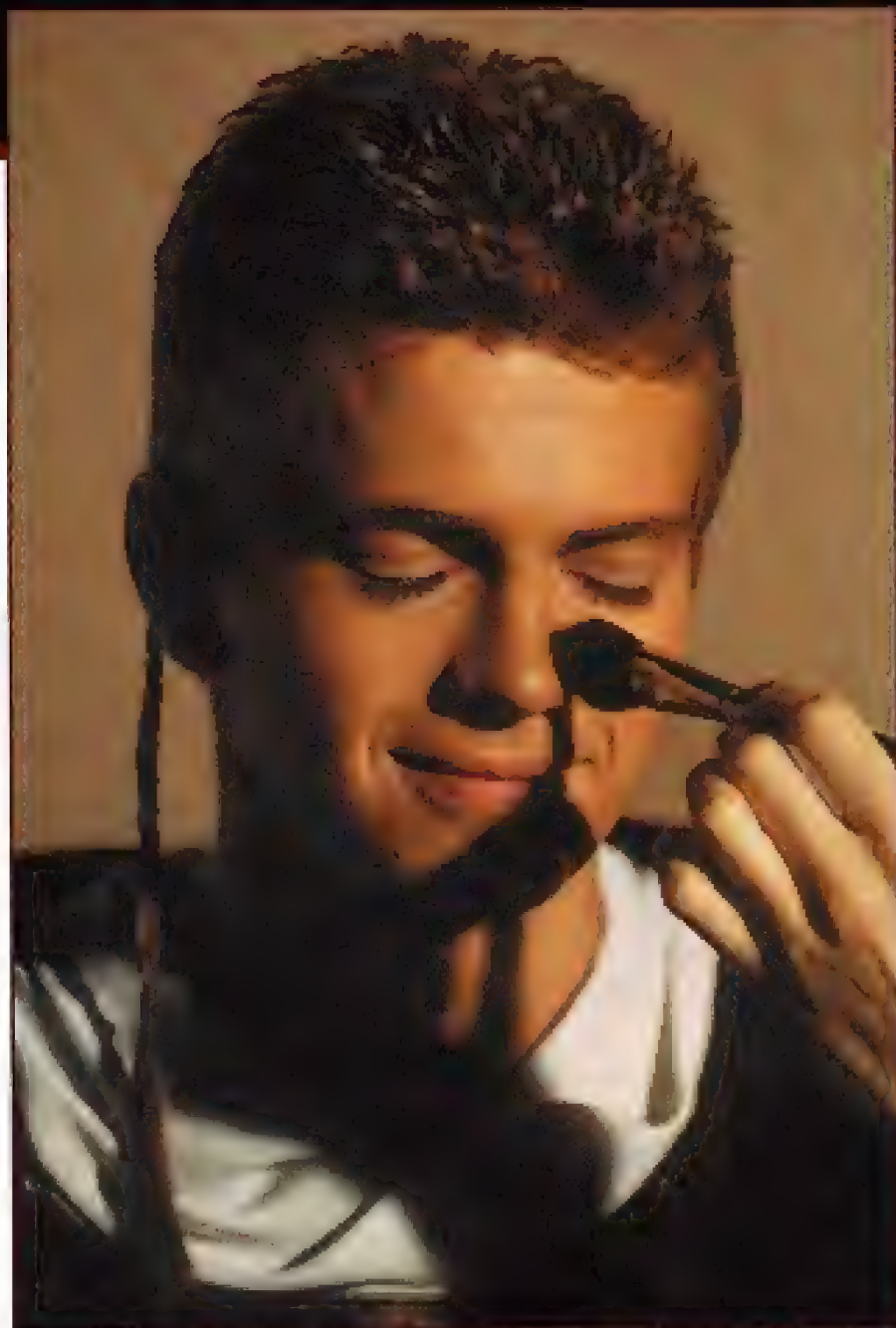
Same with Beru. I went to Melbourne and I met Bonnie Plesse, and again there was such a lovely match there, and she was the right age, and she was a very strong actor, so it was perfect.



What can you tell us about Hayden Christensen now that you have seen him in rehearsal and actually act for five weeks?

He amazes me every time. He has some tricky, tricky scenes...very complicated scenes. The arc that he's creating not only has to go through this film but the next one, and there's a lot of texture to it. And again, the way that this is composed. George writes in these vignettes and you have to really be able to play within a certain scene, but then carry it forth. And for an actor who is carrying it forth in one or two films it's very difficult. And it's a very emotional balance that Hayden's playing. And he can't really give

away too much on this one, because the next one is really when it's going to come into play. He is one of the strongest actors I've come across in a long, long time. And it's not just my opinion. People are constantly coming



Does it tickle? Hayden Christensen tries to maintain his composure as makeup turns him into Anakin Skywalker. Photo by Sue Adler.

up to me on set and saying "Do you know how good he is?" Yeah, I do. And these are other actors. It's the ultimate compliment when another actor says, "This kid is something!"

At any point during that long drawn out process when you were searching for the older Anakin Skywalker did you ever despair of finding someone?

I did until Hayden walked in the door. I'm not kidding either.

I know that there were other people in the running, but did you always think that Hayden was the best?

Yes, definitely. There obviously have to be choices. Because it's still Lucasfilm, not Gurlandfilm. But for me it was Hayden all along, without any doubt.

Did you know that as soon as you talked to him, or what was it?

It sounds very corny but this is the truth: He came in and initially there was this physical thing and it's like, OK. Then we sat down and

I just conducted a general meeting, my usual 20 minutes of chattering. Very stream of consciousness, but I know what I'm looking for. The actor always left kind of confused. But I did have a little slot to fill in my mind.

What was that slot?

So much of Anakin is built out of the nature of the character as we know it so far, coupled to the innate nature of the actor who would play him. You have to have both elements to take it to the next level. A lot of the conversation I was having was just to kind of break down, not the barriers so much, but just to have the actor start talking about the method in which they work and who they really are. So much revelation comes through the face when someone is just talking. And after five or ten minutes you get someone to relax, and then you can really get a sense of who they are.

Anakin is a very complex character, and you have to have someone who has many layers to them. It wouldn't work with someone who is just "they are what they are." It just isn't that type of a role. And with Hayden, there is so much going on there. You can just see it in his eyes. You have a conversation with him and it's just riveting. And that's what I needed for Anakin. So when someone looked as if they were going to be interesting or whatever, I'd put them on video tape during the course of the conversation. So I turned on the camera and I looked at Hayden through the camera and he just popped. Natalie does that. Ewan does that. They're just so charismatic that the camera just pops when you look through it. And I felt that with Hayden. And I thought "Oh please God, let him act!" That's the only thing. And then later I got tapes and I knew that he could handle scenes. And then when we tested him against Natalie it was so evident that he could handle anything that we threw at him.

How important is the chemistry between actors in making the selection?

"IT WAS QUITE EVIDENT THAT HAYDEN AND NATALIE HAD THIS WONDERFUL CHARISMA AND CHEMISTRY GOING BACK AND FORTH. I MEAN, IT FELT SO GORGEOUS."

Very important. No matter how wonderful any actor is, if they can't mesh with whomever they're playing with, especially when it's two actors whose onscreen chemistry is important, it wouldn't work. And it was quite evident that Hayden and Natalie had this wonderful charisma and great chemistry going back and forth. I mean, it felt so gorgeous.

How did you come up with Christopher Lee?

That was in talking with George. A lot of this process happened in developing the script, and he would talk out roles, and some would wax and wane, and some became important and others we thought were going to be important disappeared. And the role of Christopher's was one of those that we started talking out and it went a couple of ways before George decided he wanted it to be 100% human: "You know what I think we'll do? I'll have him as the Peter Cushing of this film." And it was great, because the minute he said that it's like, Christopher Lee! And then we contacted Christopher and he was so excited, he was really looking forward to this. And again it just worked out perfectly.

When you talked to Christopher Lee about taking on the part, presumably he was aware that the role entailed a lot of action?

Sure. Actors are very used to either working with a traditional stunt double, or having us employ computer generated imagery if it makes sense. It doesn't matter how young or old they are, or how fit or not. So there really weren't any surprises. Christopher is in great form. I went over to London and had lunch with him. He's of the old school. And three hours later these great tales were still coming out. He's worked on about 140+ films. You just sit there and go "Oh tell me more, please." So lovely.

How did the late script affect you?

It was a challenge. A lot of my casting relied on my looking at the actors' prior work. And

also when you're been with a project for so long you kind of get it, you know? And you understand what level is required of an actor to come into something like this. For me, the challenge was really more of the nuts and bolts of scheduling. That was, I think, the most problematic. But you know, worrying about definitively having a script wasn't it. George is so verbal and he would kind of talk everything out, so that didn't present as many problems as just scheduling. That was a nightmare.

You mean the scheduling of who would be available to shoot?

Yes, scheduling an actor. Because until you have a script you can't board it. Until you board it you can't schedule. It's like dominoes. And you know, it's a contract. I mean people forget about that aspect of it. So on the creative side it's kind of business as usual. But it's the other side that became challenging. And that's not the fun side anyway, so... Doubly challenging.

Can you tell us about the casting of Temuera Morrison?

Well, part of it was where we were filming geographically. But I had been a fan of



[ABOVE] Actor Temuera Morrison, who plays a bounty hunter in Episode 12, seems like such a simple man. Appearances are deceiving. Photo by Lisa Tomasetti. [BELOW] Natalie Portman gets the full treatment from Makeup Supervisor Isley Vanderwolf. Photo by Sue Adler.

Temuera since "Once Were Warriors." So I had met him. Anyway, I was in Los Angeles and he happened to be in L.A. too, so we got together and both agreed it would be great if this worked out. And it did.



ROBIN GURLAND



It ain't easy being green...even for an Tshi Tib, although having a smiling friend eases the burden. Photo by Sue Adler.

Was there any one role that was a particular challenge?

I'm finding they're all challenging in different ways. One, for example, called for a dignified, eighty-year-old-plus woman with dialogue that consists of long paragraphs. But nothing was insurmountable.

How about the Australian accents? Did the actors have to change them?

No. Pretty much with all the actors—even for Episode I—what we did is go with their normal speaking voices unless the part called for an accent. But aside from that, if anyone can do a mid-Atlantic accent, which is just a very neutral, that's wonderful. The worst thing, though, is to have an actor conscious of his or her accent throughout a performance. And that's often what happens. In *Star Wars* movies you really don't need to worry about it that much because who knows where any of these people are from...who knows what any of these people sound like.

Are we in for some fanboy chatter because the voice of Fett in Episode II probably won't sound like the Fett voice in *The Empire Strikes Back*?

I do to a degree, but at some point you have to lighten up a bit. But you know what's so funny is when I was casting the original Anakin for Episode I, I was just so overly conscious about an American sensibility. I looked in London, I looked here, I looked there...everywhere. And then Liam Neeson said to me, "You know, his mother is Swedish, I'm Irish, he's taken away by this posh Englishman, and you're worried about an American accent?!" I don't belittle continuity because it is very important. But, you know, to a little degree [violating] it's OK.

How often does George say to you, "I really like this particular actor for a role"?

He's very visual, so he'll do that. Case in point

was the role that we cast with Christopher Lee. George has a very visual sense of who this actor is. But the beauty of casting a *Star Wars* movie is that you don't have the concerns you have with many films in that you don't need this name actor or that name; it just doesn't come into the conversation. You can go in with complete knowns or unknowns, it's equal.

How long before the actual shooting did you start working on Episode II?

On this one I started in October of 1999.

That's when George was writing heavily on the script and just gave you notes and character descriptions? Yes.

What's the feeling you have when you see the actors you've cast finally get on the set?

It's unusual for a casting director to be here at

"THE WORST THING IS TO HAVE AN ACTOR CONSCIOUS OF HIS OR HER ACCENT THROUGHOUT A PERFORMANCE."

—ROBIN GURLAND

this point. Usually you're off doing something else. So I tend to get very protective.

Are there key scenes that you particularly like to watch?

When there's a new actor I always go on at least once or twice. And then I'll stay with them for one or two takes, just to make sure

Are there any roles left to cast?

I have one or two and then I have some voice roles left. But that will be done at the very end when we see what the CG characters are really looking like, and who needs voice and who is more of the loop group.

The loop group?

More sound, and that's Ben Burtt. Some of the characters, you know, Jabba the Hutt for example. Or more of it that's sound rather than dialogue.

What is the process finding different voice actors?

That's the trickiest for me. It's also the most fun because it's pure performance and it's very organic. What I try to do is have a sense of a benchmark of where the character is coming in. And then it's just the audition process with the actors seeing where they can go with the voice. You have to be careful, because oftentimes an actor can do a voice for a certain number of takes, but they could never sustain it for the performance. Like Lewis MacLeod who did Sebulba is incredibly gifted because he can sustain that. You know other people would lose their voice after one take. So you have to watch for that. And what I usually do is have them establish a sound, and then go to the other side of the parameters, kind of pushing the envelope. Then I'll listen to it and pick one or two of the takes that I think would work for the character. And then I'll sit down with George and he'll listen to it and say "OK, let's go with that." And then the style will be established. But it doesn't mean it'll stay there. Because

often we'll do it and at the end of the day it doesn't quite work out anyway. It has to be rethought. I was pretty lucky with the voices on Episode I, though. The ones we auditioned we're the ones that actually made it to the final cut.

Do people send you tapes of their voices?

I don't like to meet exclusive voice artists, because so much of what this is about is the performance. Also, we shoot much of the voice part during physical production [by having someone like Ahmed Best on set], so it's not just being in a sound booth. And often I find that people that do a lot of voices get very cartoonish, because what's needed is an animated sound. And I always try to stay away from that because in the *Star Wars* movies these are real beings, and they have to come from that place. And it's easier for me to find an actor who can do performance with an interesting twist, rather than getting one guy who can do 100 voices.

Actor Silas Carson, (Ki-Adi-Mundi) indicates which episode of the *Star Wars* saga he is currently filming. Photo by Lisa Tomasetti.



The CG characters are imaginary at the beginning?

Yes, but the actors are shot on set for the major characters. And then the nuance of the facial movement, even the body movement is incorporated by the ILM artists. So all that of Boss Nass was Brian Blessed. And that of Andy Secombe was Watto.

That's the case for all of the CG characters?

All of the ones that have substantial dialogue. There's a lot of characters that have maybe one or two lines and that I'll get at the end of the day. But the majority have enough that warrant bringing an actor on set. And it's just so much nicer for everyone because one actor has another to play against, with eyeline and all that. The actor who is doing the computer graphics character gets a sense of working, not in a vacuum. I mean they're working with another actor so they get the physical sense of the scene. And the ILM animators, because they then have a reference of the person who actually did the scene, can incorporate that into their artwork.

How about the characters or the actors who are wearing masks all the time, like Silas Carson, or actors who play like several roles?

Anytime the actor's face is mostly seen, then I'll cast that role. And if there's dialogue, obviously. If there's no dialogue, then it's an extra, which I don't cast. There's a fine line between that. The Creatures Effects department deals with the performance if it's animatronic, or if it's a full prosthetic. And then I'll come back and voice it at the end of the day, and then usually it's not the same actor. With Silas I was very lucky again because he kind of was established as Ki-Adi-Mundi and then it worked for him to do Nute Gunray. And traditionally for Nute I would not have used the same actor for the voice, but because he's so good I could. ☺

ROBIN GURLAND

Area Film Satirized — **STAR WARS**[®] **the** **C**

by Scott Chernoff

A popular film series was satirized recently, when a group of self-appointed humorists used parody, obscure references to arcane trivia, and even manipulated photographs to make light of Oscar-winning movies revered by fans worldwide. Sources said the "humor" writers were unapologetic in their skewering of the saga, known as "Star Wars," or "the Star Wars saga," with one of them, editor-in-chief Robert Siegel, charging, "It's all make-believe stuff—but people take it so seriously."

Welcome to the world of *The Onion*, the weekly newspaper and Web site that creates mock news stories much like the paragraph above. In the hilarious alternate reality covered by *The Onion*, Bill Clinton was not only the President of the United States these last eight years, but he was also an adolescent at heart who stayed up until 2 a.m. making a construction paper collage for his "best friend in the whole wide world," spent the waning weeks of his presidency skipping cabinet meetings due to a severe case of "senioritis," and even took a month-long leave of absence to stand in line for *The Phantom Menace*.

"My fellow Americans," Clinton said in *The Onion*, "like so many of you, I am extremely eager to see the next chapter in the greatest movie series in the history of mankind. And, as president of the nation that has produced these movies, I am fully committed to being at that very first showing, even if it means missing almost four weeks of work."

Pictured holding a toy lightsaber and said to be sporting an IG-88 tie-clip, the President added, "There are these droids in *The Phantom Menace* that look like giant orbs, but then they unfold like Transformers and fight. And Darth Maul has this lightsaber that's double-bladed. It's going to be so incredible."

The article, reprinted on page 56, is an *Onion* classic because it's funny on so many levels. Not only did it parody the public anticipation leading up to Episode I's release (which was three weeks away at the time), but it also successfully satirized Clinton, who in the article is willing to negotiate a compromise about which fan in line gets to play Han Solo in a re-enactment of the classic trilogy. At the same time, the piece pokes fun at fan subculture, with Clinton standing in for all fans' obsession with every detail of the *Star Wars* universe. And the whole thing is reported in the deadpan style of the most generic newspaper on the planet.

If you've never heard of *The Onion*, it is safe to say that you have been missing out, big time. Over a million readers check in every week, either on the Web at www.theonion.com, or by subscribing to or picking up the printed newspaper for free in such cities as Denver, Chicago, Milwaukee or Madison, Wisconsin—the college town where *The Onion* was born and is still based. The site has spawned two best-selling books and a syndicated radio show, was profiled in *The Los Angeles Times* and magazines *Wired* and *The New Yorker*, and received the 1999 Thurber Prize for American Humor.

The *Onion* story started in 1983, when publisher Peter Halse and Jim's Journal cartoonist Scott Dikkers (*The Onion*'s original editor, who still oversees many *Onion* operations) took over a small local joke flyer, expanding it to a newspaper spoof and then hitting the Web in 1996. Since then, *The Onion* has maintained its independent, often savage voice even as it has steadily grown in popularity. (Parents take note: some of *The Onion*'s humor, although not that reprinted in this magazine, could be considered inappropriate for children, with stories sometimes containing curse words and sexual situations.) Whether writing about volatile political topics or mundane, everyday situa-

Some of the funniest articles in *The Onion*—the popular and award-winning newspaper and Website that spoofs *USA Today*—have been about *Star Wars*.

Now, the Insider talks to *The Onion*'s writers and presents some of its greatest stories.

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The staff of *The Onion* believe that laughter and mockery define what it means to be human. Does anyone else find a 5-foot Weekee hilarious? Laugh it up, fuzzball.

Jonathan Lipnicki To Star As Young "Dark Helmet" in *Spaceballs* Prequel



"It was all those teeth that really won him the part," said a spokesperson for Mel Brooks. "I mean, look at all those teeth!"

tions, *The Onion* exposes often-overlooked truths about life, presented so straightforwardly as to be absurd.

Or, as editor-in-chief Siegel put it, "We take crazy things and we say them in the least crazy way possible."

The result is a powerfully funny parody of *USA Today*, complete with all those colorful charts, graphs, and surveys to complement the national, international, and local "news." The U.S./world news usually reflects whatever's going on that week, such as the recent headline, "Bush Horrified To Learn Presidential Salary," while the local news often involves the most common of experiences, as in the headline, "Area Man Has No Idea What He Went Downstairs For." There are also funny columns by characters created by *Onion* writers. (The *Insider's* own 2-1B owes a tremendous debt to *The Onion*, but don't tell him I said that.)

Many of *The Onion's* best stories have been about *Star Wars*. There are too many jokes and references to list or re-print here, but among the headlines: "Death Star to Open Day Care Center," "Jawa Appointed

**"WE TAKE CRAZY THINGS
AND WE SAY THEM IN THE
LEAST CRAZY WAY POSSIBLE."**

Secretary of Transportation," and the classic announcement, "Jonathan Lipnicki To Star As Young 'Dark Helmet' in *Spaceballs* Prequel," featuring a photo of the young *Jerry Maguire* star, who indeed does look like a young Rick Moranis, the actor who played the bad guy in Mel Brooks' *Star Wars* spoof.

At the time of the Special Edition, one article had Lucasfilm preparing a 1998 21st Anniversary re-release of the classic trilogy, claiming to quote George Lucas as promising more all-new footage and telling fans, "If you haven't seen *Return of the Jedi* with the sandstorm scene, then you haven't seen it at all. You have been ripped off."

Star Wars jokes sometimes seep into all kinds of stories, like the recent article about a minister who injects humor into his sermons, including a drawing of himself as Qui-Gon Jinn for the church bulletin, or the 1996 column asking, "When Are They Going To Finish The Arthur Trilogy?", which was ostensibly about the Dudley Moore Arthur movies but really echoed fans crying out for a *Star Wars* prequel. Another column was headlined, "The Great *Star Wars* Nearly Made Me Deaf, Because It Was So Loud." As far back as 1993, when it catered more to the local University of Wisconsin readership, *The Onion* ran the headline, "University Cuts Jedi Studies Program."

I first discovered *The Onion* back in 1994, when a friend and fellow *Star Wars* fan passed along an article titled "Boba Fett Was a True Renaissance Man." The column—which portrays the bounty hunter as a gourmet chef, poet, "painter, sculptor, spacecraft designer, aviator and mandolin player"—bore the byline, "by Dr. Krieb Nyees, Ysalamarian Art Historian."

That story was actually written by Dan Vebber, a former *Onion* staffer who now writes for Fox's *Futurama*, but these days the majority of *Star Wars* stuff in *The Onion* is written by Tim Harrod, a transplant from Michigan who joined the staff in Madison full-time in 1995 after starting out by submitting headlines, some of which would stand on their own as one-line jokes, while others would be turned into full stories by staff writers. "My first headline ever to appear in the paper," Harrod recalled, "was 'Phillip Morris Lawyers Deny Cigarettes are Cylindrical.'"

Harrod wrote the story about Clinton standing in line for Episode I—but don't think he wrote it to make fun of hardcore fans. When

**"RETURN OF THE JEDI WAS RELEASED ON MY 15TH BIRTHDAY
AND I WAS THE FIRST IN LINE," HE SAID, ALTHOUGH, "SOME
OTHER IDIOT DRESSED AS LUKE SKYWALKER GOT HIS PICTURE
IN THE PAPER WITH THE CAPTION 'FIRST IN LINE.'"**

asked what he thought of fans who lined up for days to see Episode I, Harrod replied, "Well, the ones I stood in line with seemed very nice. I got someone to hold my place while I went home and showered. I think that was the only time I missed an *Onion* writers meeting. By the time it was a few hours to go, the line was around the block and the street was packed with people in costumes. It was a glorious time."

Waiting in line for *Star Wars* was nothing new for Harrod, whose ninth birthday—May 25, 1977—coincided with the release of the original film. "*Return of the Jedi*" was released on my 15th birthday and I was the first in line," he said, although, "some other idiot dressed as Luke Skywalker got his picture in the paper with the caption 'first in line.'"

Siegel, who started as a writer in 1994 and worked his way up to editor, said he was inspired by *Star Wars* early in life. "I'm a huge fan," he said, noting, "I'm sure most 28-year-olds would say that—I'm not all that unique. I waited in line the day the movie came out. I was six years old and went to see it a billion times that summer."

"When I first saw it," Siegel continued, "I got to the theater early, and I snuck in and watched the medal ceremony scene, so that was the first thing I ever saw. I didn't know who any of the characters were, and I thought, 'Oh my God—I'm going to find out.' When I saw the stormtroopers in the very first scene where they charge through the blast door, my jaw just dropped and I thought, 'This is the coolest thing I've ever seen in my life.'"

So it's only natural for *Star Wars* to seep into *The Onion*. "When I'm writing headlines," Harrod said, "I usually don't say to myself, 'A *Star Wars* headline would be really good,' but there's so much *Star Wars* on my brain, it's only organic that some of the headlines are going to be *Star Wars*-related. And of course, the spring that *The Phantom Menace* was released, just about everybody's headline list was peppered with all kinds of *Star Wars* jokes."

In fact, most of Harrod's *Star Wars* articles wouldn't be half as funny if he wasn't a *Star Wars* fan himself. Take his recent column, "Dressing Your Dog As Boba Fett Is Something You Have to Devote A Weekend To," which he wrote in the voice of a member of a *Star Wars* novel reading club who creates *Star Wars* character costumes for himself and his cocker spaniel, Nikto. What starts as an innocent joke of dressing the dog like Princess Leia turns into an obsession culminating in complex projects that border on animal cruelty, like wrapping the dog in bandages to simulate a Tusken Raider.

Woven into the satire are details from *Star Wars* novels that only a true fan could know. "I've read a lot of the books, not all of them," Harrod said, noting that while it might have been possible to write the column without knowing the books, "I wouldn't want to read the arti-

Death Star to Open Day Care Center



Nothing, not even the might Death Star, is safe from *The Onion*. Imperial children are taught that the Death Star is round, not flat.

cle that came from that—I doubt it would be very funny.

"I don't know to what extent I'm making fun of the diehard fan," Harrod added. "I don't know if it's possible, because I am one."

Indeed, one issue featured a photo of Harrod, surrounded by many of his own *Star Wars* toys and products, along with the headline, "*Star Wars* Fan Collects All 48,720."

Said Siegel, "We're definitely making fun of ourselves. In some stories, we're just making fun of other people on the staff. We frequently make fun of Tim. We'll come in on a Sunday night and he'll be in the writers room watching *Star Wars*—but he'll be watching it in Spanish, because presumably he's seen it so many times, he needs to find some way to make it fresh and exciting. So we like to make fun of him a little—but we're all pretty much geeks. We love *Star Wars*."

(*The Onion*'s staff is composed of several talented people, including head writer Todd Hanson; writers Maria Schneider, Carol Kolb, and John Krewson; and graphics/photo director Mike Loew, who puts together the spot-on photos and composites that accompany the articles.)

Being *Star Wars* fans also means that *The Onion*'s writers have a

WHEN I SAW THE STORMTROOPERS IN THE VERY FIRST SCENE...MY JAW JUST DROPPED AND I THOUGHT, 'THIS IS THE COOLEST THING I'VE EVER SEEN IN MY LIFE.'"

pretty good idea what will make other fans laugh. "When we do a story about *Star Wars*," Siegel said, "we know *Star Wars* fans are going to be reading and scrutinizing it, so we put extra pressure on ourselves to make it really perfect."

"One of our staples," he continued, "in terms of humor techniques, is using obscure references. But it's a tricky thing with *Star Wars*, because you really have to go pretty obscure. You can't just make a joke about Boba Fett, because Boba Fett with any other film would be pretty obscure—but he's really famous. So for *Star Wars*, you've got to make jokes about Lobot or Zuckuss, because a *Star Wars* freak is not really going to get excited about a Boba Fett reference. You've got to go even deeper."

Harrod agreed, saying, "I recall your interview with the *Simpsons* writer (Insider #38), who said you can make a *Star Wars* reference and not worry whether anyone's going to get it. The problem is that's not strictly true, because I make really obscure references, and heaven knows the *Star Wars* universe has plenty obscure nooks and crannies, from the roleplaying games to the 'Holiday Special.'"

"I DON'T KNOW TO WHAT EXTENT I'M MAKING FUN OF THE DIEHARD FAN," HARROD ADDED. "I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S POSSIBLE, BECAUSE I AM ONE."

To that end, Harrod crams his *Star Wars* stories with as many subtle details and references as he can, from using an actual Jawa name (Het Nikk) from the Expanded Universe for the "Transportation Secretary" story to noting that Clinton arrived at the Episode I line at 11:38 in the morning because he wanted to "bury the number [1138] in there just as Lucas does in his films—I have no idea if anyone noticed."

But even if few noticed, it wouldn't have bothered Siegel, who said, "One of *The Onion's* guiding principles is that we're unafraid to make jokes that only five people get. We feel like the five people who do get the joke that's incredibly obscure will absolutely love it and they'll go nuts."

Still, even Siegel has sometimes kept Harrod from delving too deeply into the *Star Wars* canon. For example, Siegel re-wrote the last line in the story about Clinton in line for Episode I, making Clinton echo Han Solo in saying he's so excited that he could make the Kessel Run in 12 parsecs. Recalled Harrod, "I lobbied for a far more obscure joke: 'I feel as excited as Lady Valarian when D'Wopp announced he was going after the Solo bounty.'"

Recalled Siegel, "Once Tim was in the office, and I mentioned Dengar. Whatever my obscure joke was, Dengar was the punchline. But Tim didn't think that was funny. Without missing a beat, Tim said, 'You

Star Wars Fan Collects All 48,720



Tim Harrod, staff writer for *The Onion*, contemplates life in the LEGO universe while guarding his impressive *Star Wars* collection.

know, Dengar was the best man at Boba Fett's wedding.' It's from one of the books. And I guess that's what's funny about it all—when people take something that is inherently trivial and attach great importance to it. That's the comedic juxtaposition that makes fandom funny."

"Just the idea that he, with a completely straight face, would tell us that—we were cracking up."

For more of *The Onion*, go to www.theonion.com; you can also visit Tim Harrod's personal Web page at www.timharrod.com.

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Clinton Takes Leave Of Office To Star

WASHINGTON, DC—Citing "America's unprecedented prosperity and stability" and "this one part where this ship is underwater and this sea-monster thing tries to eat it," Bill Clinton became the first U.S. president to take a leave of absence Tuesday, temporarily stepping down to wait in line for the May 19 opening of *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace*.

"My fellow Americans, like so many of you, I am extremely eager to see the next chapter in the greatest movie series in the history of mankind," Clinton, sporting a limited-edition IG-88 tie clip, said during a White House press conference. "And, as president of the nation that has produced these movies, I am fully committed to being at that very first showing, even if it means missing almost four weeks of work."

Added Clinton: "There are these droids in *Phantom Menace* that look like giant orbs, but then they unfold like Transformers and fight. And Darth Maul has this light saber that's double-bladed. It's going to be so incredible."

Clinton began waiting in line with "Joe," a friend who owns The Sarlacc Pit, a comic-book store in downtown D.C.

"Joe is the only person who can beat me at *Star Wars Trivial Pursuit*. He knows the English lyrics to 'Lapti Nekt.' He was also the one who told me that Uncle Owen is really Obi-Wan's brother, which came as quite a surprise, because, like most people, I had always

assumed that Owen was Anakin's brother. I did, however, inform Joe that Bruce Boa, the actor who played General Rieekan, also played the guy on *Fawlty Towers* who wanted the Waldorf salad. Joe did not know that."

Clinton arrived at the theater at 11:38 a.m. Tuesday, becoming the 17th person in line. But by 2 p.m., he had maneuvered his way to sixth by winning a series of *Star Wars Customizable Card Game* tournaments and trivia challenges.

"This one guy tried to beat me by asking Hammerhead's real name. Can you believe it? As if I'd never read *Tales From The Mos Eisley Cantina*, even if I wasn't into the role-playing game. I knew he was a rube when he asked that, so I went in for the kill by asking him the name of the Rodian in the *Star Wars* Holiday Special."

"Of course," Clinton continued, "Hammerhead is Momaw Nador, and the Rodian was Ludlo." The president then excused himself to join a group sing-along of "Weird Al" Yankovic's "Yoda."

Despite being confined to one spot for the next month, Clinton said he expects to have plenty of activities to pass the time. "Joe and I are trying to organize a thing where we divide up parts and re-enact all the movies, except we both want to be Han. I think I should get to be Han because I am the leader of the free world, but if that becomes a deal-breaker, I would likely be willing to compromise."



Bill Clinton introduces his new cabinet to the world press. Sure, they're made of plastic—but what else is new.

Presidential aides have also been instructed to supply Clinton with magazine articles concerning Episode I as they become available, as well as deliver, immediately upon publication, the final installment of the four-issue Dark Horse Comics miniseries *Boba Fett: Enemy Of The Empire*.

"Issue three ended just as Fett and Vader were about to start fighting," Clinton said. "They both want this alien head in a box that can tell the future, and the moment Fett finally gets it, Vader appears. Obviously, it's not going to be a fight to the death, because the

OUR FAVORITE ONION HEADLINES

OK, so it's impossible to choose just a handful, but here are some of the headlines that made us laugh the hardest

**Elegant Funeral Ruined
By Presence Of Hideous Corpse**

Letter D Pulls Sponsorship From Sesame Street

**God Answers Prayers Of Paralyzed Little Boy:
'No,' Says God**

Texans Elect Gun

Clinton Forced To Kneel Before Zod

**Nation's Schoolchildren
Call for Cuts In Math, Science Funding**

Germany Disavows Ties With The Scorpions

Southern Comfort Comforts Southerner

**Price-Gun-Wielding Maniac
Riddles Supermarket With Savings**

Area Mom Freaking Out For No Reason Again

**Swiss Unable To Maintain Neutrality
Toward Delicious Pastries**

nd In Line For *Star Wars: Episode I*

whole story takes place prior to the trilogy, but it's still sure to be a great fight."

Clinton said he hopes to see *Phantom Menace* at least 20 times between May 19 and May 23, then return to office on the 24th, when he will scale back to once-a-day screenings. The president also noted that during his extended absence from the White

House, he will be available in the event of an emergency.

the 1977 release of the original, has rarely disrupted his official duties for *Star Wars*-related activities. Notable exceptions include a May 1983 hiatus from the Arkansas governorship to see *Return Of The Jedi* on its opening day and a 1995 trip to an Arlington, VA, *Star Wars* convention to obtain the autographs of actors Anthony Daniels, Jeremy Bulloch and

Femi Taylor, as well as Jedi Academy trilogy author Kevin J. Anderson.

Clinton is also believed to have the largest collection of *Star Wars* merchandise in the entire executive branch.

Clinton went on to tell King that the infamous "missile-firing Boba Fett" action figure, rumored to have been produced in small quantities by Kenner, never actually reached the consumer, and that the only such Fetts available are ones made by collectors.

Despite the popularity of Clinton's hiatus within the nation's science-fiction/fantasy community, Republican leaders have roundly denounced the move.

"Clinton was given the trust of a nation and, once again, he has abused that trust, abandoning his post during a time of war. There are more important things for him to be worrying about at this juncture than such trivial concerns," Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA) said. "Besides, I hate that stupid Jar-Jar. He totally sounds like Elmo."

Specter then sneered in a high-pitched voice, "Oooh, people gonna die?"

Clinton responded swiftly to Specter's criticisms.

"I would urge all Americans to withhold judgment on the Jar-Jar issue until they have seen the film. After all, Yoda talked like Grover, and he is one of the great characters in the *Star Wars* pantheon," Clinton said. "As long as *The Phantom Menace* doesn't have those stupid teddy bears in it, I don't care."

"I've been waiting 16 years for this movie, and now it's almost here," Clinton said. "I can't believe it. I'm so excited, I feel like I could make the Kessel Run in less than 12 parsecs." ☮

"I WOULD URGE ALL AMERICANS TO WITHHOLD JUDGMENT ON THE JAR-JAR ISSUE UNTIL THEY HAVE SEEN THE FILM. AFTER ALL, YODA TALKED LIKE GROVER, AND HE IS ONE OF THE GREAT CHARACTERS IN THE STAR WARS PANTHEON," CLINTON SAID.

House, he will be available in the event of an emergency.

"Should a major crisis arise, whether regarding the situation in Kosovo or anywhere else, I can be reached at my place in line by cell phone," Clinton said. "But I have urged my advisors only to contact me if absolutely necessary. I would also urge Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic to follow the example of the Jedi Knights and use his powers only for knowledge and defense, never for attack."

Added Clinton: "Wars not make one great."

Clinton, a die-hard *Star Wars* fan ever since

Brad Pitt Promises 1,000 Years of Peace

Martini, Rossi Slain By Anti-Spumanti Extremists

Mr. T To Pity Fool

Clinton Deploys Vowels to Bosnia

Parents' Record Collection Deemed Hilarious

Drunken Man Makes Interesting Point About Society

Rainbows: Why Are There So Many Songs About Them?

10-Year-Old Denies Girl-Liking Allegations

Sylvester Stallone

Accidentally Makes The Specialist Again

Totally Hot Chick Also Way Psycho

Whitewater Probe Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Area Man Dying To Tell Someone His Cool Password

Klingon Speakers Now Outnumber Navajo Speakers

Cousin Oliver To Join White House

For Last Year Of Clinton Presidency

Internet Friend Gradually Getting Creepier

Local Man Might As Well Just Give Up

SHINING STARS

FROM LUKE & LEIA TO VADER & OBI-WAN, EACH STAR WARS CHARACTER HAS SHINED IN THE COMIC-BOOK SPOTLIGHT

BY RICH HANDLEY

» FOR THIS ISSUE, *Star Wars Insider* set out to find the quintessential comic-book story for each major character in the classic *Star Wars* trilogy—those comics that best captured the appeal and essence of our favorite characters from the *Star Wars* saga. They are stories that go to the core of each personality, providing the perfect distillation of the character's style, personality, and values. With more than 500 *Star Wars* comics having seen print in the last two decades, there was a lot to choose from. Here are our picks:

LUKE SKYWALKER

Dark Empire #1-6

Written by Tom Veitch; art by Cam Kennedy
Dark Horse, 1991; collected in the trade paperback *Dark Empire*

Luke ignores his mentors' teachings and attempts to defeat the dark side from within. Shockingly, he fails, ruling the galaxy at the Emperor's side before overcoming the darkness binding his spirit. This dangerous glimpse of what Luke could have become ultimately reinforces his nobility.

"Riders in the Void"

Written Archie Goodwin; art by Michael Golden & Terry Austin

Marvel #38, 1981; reprinted by Dark Horse in *Classic Star Wars: A Long Time Ago* #2

Trapped in a void, Luke and Leia meet a traveler who has spent eons alone in space, fearful of others. By expressing their caring for each other, they show the lone Rider that there is still love in the universe. A touching story, beautifully showcasing Luke's bond with Leia.

"Death-Masque"

Written by Steve Moore; art by John Stokes
Marvel UK #149, 1981; out of print; the only *Star Wars* comic never published in the U.S.

Assassin Alton Who sets out to capture Luke for the Empire, using a deadly nightmare demon to subject him to horrible illusions of Han and Leia dying. The rarest of all Marvel tales, this one gets to the heart of what Luke values most: his loved ones.

LEIA ORGANA

"The Alderaan Factor"

Written by Randy Stradley; art by Bob McLeod & Tom Palmer

Marvel #86, 1984; reprinted by Dark Horse in *Classic Star Wars: A Long Time Ago* #6

Hunted by Imperials on Yinchon, Leia learns

that her stormtrooper escort is Alderaanian. Horrified at his willingness to serve the Empire that destroyed their homeworld, she tries to cut through the layers of Imperial programming clouding his perception.

"Weapons Master"

Written by Archie Goodwin; art by Carmine Infantino & Steve Mitchell

Star Wars: Four New Adventures in Full Color, Marvel Illustrated Book #1, 1981; out of print
Ever wonder how a member of the Royal House of Alderaan, a world without weapons, became such a fine shot? She was trained by mercenary Giles Durane, who served Bail Organa in the Clone Wars. But Durane taught her more than just how to fight—he taught her betrayal.

"Princess Leia, Imperial Servant"

Written by Russ Manning; art by Russ Manning & Russ Helm

L.A. Times strip #5, 1979; reprinted by Dark Horse as *Classic Star Wars: The Early Adventures* #5

The plot is average, the idea of Lady Tarkin



"THIS DANGEROUS GLIMPSE OF WHAT LUKE COULD HAVE BECOME ULTIMATELY REINFORCES HIS NOBILITY."

—RICH HANDLEY

a bit silly—but Leia is perfectly in character as she poses as a servant girl to avoid capture inside an Imperial mining facility. A scene in which she "accidentally" douses a famous Rebel-killer with a frozen drink makes the story!

HAN SOLO

"Shadeshine"

Written by David Michelinie; art by Carmine Infantino & Rudi Nebres

Marvel Annual #2, 1982; reprinted by Dark Horse in *Classic Star Wars: A Long Time Ago* #5

While visiting Ventooine to find the rare spice sansanna, Han becomes embroiled in a political coup, forced to topple a cruel despot. In typical fashion, though, his heroism is borne not out of any desire to act heroically, but through motivated self-interest.

"The Bounty Hunter of Ord Mantell"

Written by Archie Goodwin; art by Al Williamson

L.A. Times strip #12, 1981; reprinted by Dark Horse in *Classic Star Wars* #1

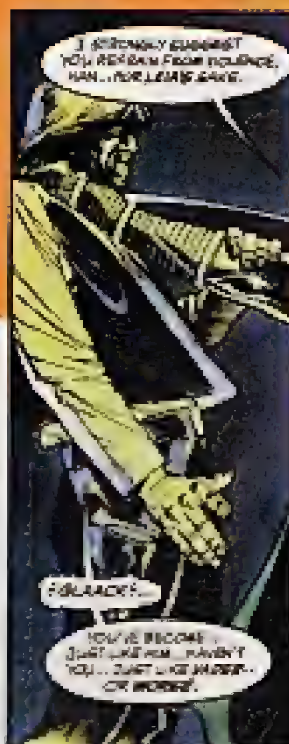
Based on a throwaway line from *The Empire Strikes Back*, Goodwin & Williamson's first newspaper strip reveals the identity of the bounty hunter at Ord Mantell. The alien cyborg, Skorr, sees right through Han and knows exactly how to lure him in: by endangering his friends.

"Jaws of Doom"

Written by Jo Duffy; art by Ron Frenz, Tom Palmer, & Tom Mandrake

Marvel #81, 1984; reprinted by Dark Horse in *Classic Star Wars: A Long Time Ago* #4

Picking up where *Return of the Jedi* left off, Han must learn to cope with having missed a year of his life while frozen in carbonite. Frustrated, he returns to Tatooine to reclaim



lost funds and ends up face-to-face with an enemy he thought he'd destroyed: Boba Fett himself.

DARTH VADER

"Dark Lord's Conscience"

Written by Alan Moore; art by John Stokes
Marvel UK #155, 1982; reprinted by Dark Horse in *Classic Star Wars: Devilworlds*

Vader accepts an invitation to Cheelt for a game of Firepath with Lady Dohl, who has secretly conspired with an assassin to kill him. Vader has foreseen their treachery, however, and eliminates them both in the gameboard fire of his winning move. His departing line is deliciously malevolent: "A" scrappy, disappointing opening, but the endgame provided some satisfaction."

"Extinction"

Written by Ron Marz; art by Claudio Castellini & Jason Hram

Star Wars Tales #1-2, Dark Horse, 1999; still in print

Beautifully illustrated, this two-parter about Vader's search for a Jedi woman he failed to kill years before epitomizes his single-minded determination to succeed at all he sets out to do. The pace is sweeping, the dialogue between Vader and Mara Jade right on the mark, and readers are left breathless to learn

more about Vader's history with the Jedi he calls the Dark Woman.

"Dark Encounter"

Written by Archie Goodwin; art by Carmine Infantino & Bob Wiacek

Marvel #29, 1979; out of print

The final chapter of Marvel's Valance trilogy finds Vader on Centares, battling a cyborg bounty hunter for the identity of Luke Skywalker. One of Marvel's most popular and essential stories, this issue proves once again why the late Archie Goodwin was such a legend in his field.

CHEWBACCA

Chewbacca #1-4

Written by Darko Macan; art by various artists
Dark Horse, 2000; collected in trade paperback (scheduled for release January, 2001)

Following Chewie's death in R.A. Salvatore's novel *Vector Prime*, this miniseries pays touching tribute to his memory with 10 tales of courage, humor, love, and honor, told by those who knew him best: his friends and family.

LANDO CALRISSIAN

"Scoundrel's Wages"

Written by Mark Schultz; art by Mel Rubi & Andrew Pepoy

The Bounty Hunters #2, Dark Horse, 1999; collected in trade paperback

Captured by bounty hunters and forced to partake in a deadly game, Lando must live up to his reputation as a gambler and scoundrel in order to save Han Solo's life.

C-3PO & R2-D2

The Protocol Offensive

Written by Anthony Daniels; story by Brian Daley & Ryder Windham; art by Igor Kordey
Droids special, Dark Horse, 1997; out of print

A witty tale from the droids' early days, this one-shot, beautifully painted by Kordey, captures all the bickering, friendship, and heroism of Star Wars' own Laurel and Hardy. What else would one expect from the actor inside Threepio and the author of the original Han Solo trilogy?

OBI-WAN KENOBI

"Silent Drifting"

Written by Jo Duffy; art by Carmine Infantino & Bob Wiacek

Marvel #24, 1979; out of print

In this first glimpse at Obi-Wan's earlier days, the Jedi must peacefully save a passenger liner from pirates. A light story, reverently showcasing Kenobi's heroism and wisdom.

WEDGE ANTILLES

"The Phantom Affair"

Written by Mike Stackpole & Darko Macan; art by Edwin Biukovic, John Nadeau & Jordi Ensign

X-Wing Rogue Squadron #5-8, Dark Horse, 1996; collected in trade paperback

Often cited as the most popular chapter of the *X-Wing* series, this tale of the Imperial who killed Wedge's parents gives the pilot dimension and a truly riveting backstory. That we could care so much about so minor a film character is proof of its brilliance.

BOBA FETT

"Twin Engines of Destruction"

Written by Andy Mangels; art by John Nadeau & Jordi Ensign

Boba Fett special, Dark Horse, 1997; collected in trade paperback

Few authors have captured a character so deftly. Fett's search for impersonator Jodo Kast is a blast, but it's his dialogue that makes this issue: namely, that he has so little. Mangels sums Fett up succinctly when, asked to remove his helmet and show his face, Fett replies, "This is my face."

JABBA THE HUTT

"The Dynasty Trap"

Written by Jim Woodring; art by Art Wetherwell & Monty Sheldon

Jabba the Hutt #3, Dark Horse, 1995; collected in trade paperback

Any writer who would dare have Jabba space his enemies and gleefully revel, "Ha! I love to watch 'em pop!" deserves mention. In fact, all four of Woodring's Jabba one-shots are hysterical, but this is the most deliciously decadent—just like the Hutt himself.

PALPATINE

Dark Empire #1-6

Written by Tom Veitch; art by Cam Kennedy
Dark Horse, 1991; collected in trade paperback

The Emperor's evil is so strong that it lives beyond his death, given new life by a series of clones that reclaim his hold on the galaxy. Veitch's depiction of Palpatine so closely mirrors that shown on film that it's easy to hear Ian McDiarmid's crackling voice with each line of dialogue. ☮

DO N'T WORRY, LITTLE JEDI...I WILL NOT HARM YOU.

INDEED, I WILL TEACH YOU THINGS YOU HAVE NEVER IMAGINED. I WILL SHOW YOU THE REAL POWER A JEDI CAN WIELD!

"VEITCH'S DEPICTION OF PALPATINE SO CLOSELY MIRRORS THAT SHOWN ON FILM THAT IT'S EASY TO HEAR IAN MCDIARMID'S CRACKLING VOICE WITH EACH LINE OF DIALOGUE." —KECH HANDLEY

PREPARE TO MEET THY DOOM!



STAR WARS **BOBA FETT** **AGENT OF DOOM**



FEATURING THE TRIUMPHANT RETURN OF STAR WARS: DARK EMPIRE ARTIST
CAM KENNEDY!



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POINT OF NO RETURN

AUTHOR KATHY TYERS RETURNS TO THE STAR WARS
UNIVERSE WITH *BALANCE POINT*

BY JASON FRY

» KATHY TYERS KNOWS A THING OR TWO ABOUT ALIEN INVASIONS. Six years ago, in *The Truce at Bakura*, Tyers chronicled an invasion of the Star Wars galaxy by the Ssi-ruuk, strange aliens that seemingly lacked all regard for life. Now, in her latest novel, *The New Jedi Order: Balance Point* (Del Rey, \$26), Tyers picks up the story of another set of extragalactic villains—the Yuuzhan Vong—where James Luceno left off in *The New Jedi Order: Agents of Chaos: Jedi Eclipse*. (Luceno was also a collaborator of the late Brian Daley, the seminal Star Wars author, and wrote a tribute to Daley in *Insider* #29.)

Two books, two invasions. Yet the similarities between *The Truce at Bakura* and *Balance Point* end there. In the timeline of the Star Wars saga, *Balance Point* comes some two decades after *Truce*, at a time when Han and Leia have three Jedi children, Luke Skywalker has married Mara Jade, and the Empire is barely a memory. And this time, as readers of *The New Jedi Order* know all too well, the invaders aren't going to be pushed back without a terrible cost.

Indeed, in *Balance Point*, the relentless Vong are tightening their grip, threatening desperate bands of refugees stranded on the polluted planet of Duro—and watched over by an estranged Han Solo and Princess Leia.

Given the length and complexity of *The New Jedi Order* saga, Tyers had a rather different assignment than she'd drawn with *Bakura*—telling just a small piece of the story instead of the entire one. Tyers told the *Insider* that she was asked to construct her book around three characters: the young Jedi Jacen Solo would play the lead, with either Han or Leia as the second main character, and someone from the Jedi circle as the third

major player. Tyers chose Mara Jade, eager for a chance to explore the relationship between her and Luke. However, as readers will soon discover, she crafted a decidedly sharp turn in the life of the Emperor's-Hand-turned-Jedi Knight—one that Tyers admitted she "lobbied good and hard for."

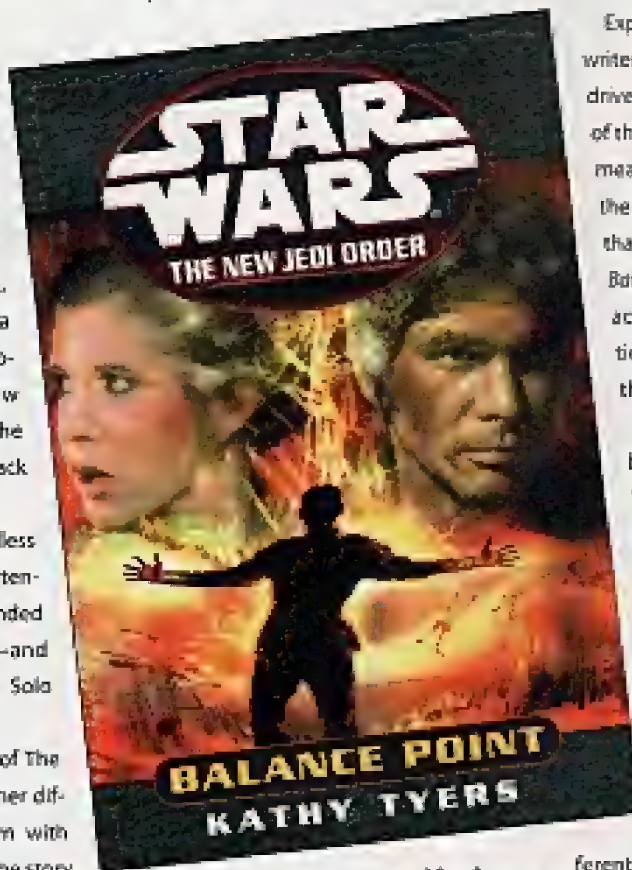
Explained the author, "I'm a character writer—to me, good fiction is character-driven." Stepping into the story during one of the early chapters of *The New Jedi Order* meant Tyers had to follow the dictates of the saga's plot, but Tyers noted, "I did all that I could to make sure the story in *Balance Point* revolves around those characters and their response to the situations—which include this invasion and their relationships."

As a result, *Balance Point* may feel a bit "quieter" than its predecessors in *The New Jedi Order*, with the action limited largely to Duro, and the interstellar warfare often taking a back seat to the interplay between the main characters. That's just fine with Tyers.

"It works better for me, from a storytelling standpoint, to keep the thematic material as tight as possible so you're showing different aspects of the same situation through different

points of view," she said. "Although the main characters start out separately, by the end it's our heroes shoulder-to-shoulder against the enemy—which I think is part of what makes *Star Wars* great."

Tyers is proudest of her work in the scenes between Luke and Mara—an assignment she



"I'M A
CHARACTER WRITER—
TO ME, GOOD FICTION
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—AUTHOR KATHY TYERS

had coveted since *Bakura*. While *Bakura* took place immediately after *Return of the Jedi*, Mara Jade had already been introduced in Timothy Zahn's *Thrawn* trilogy, set five years later. "I already had Mara pegged as the future Mrs. Skywalker in my heart and mind," said Tyers. Still, she wanted to give Luke a Bakuran love interest (it would turn out to be Gaeriel Captison)—but she knew that with Mara still in Luke's future, his relationship with Gaeriel was doomed from the start.

Fast-forward six years on Earth and 21 years in a galaxy far, far away, and Tyers had another chance to write about Luke in love—and she took full advantage of it. "To actually write Luke as a happily married man was a delight," she said.

Thanks to Tyers, readers of *Balance Point* will get to go inside the mind of the rapidly maturing Jacen Solo, whose struggles with the nature of the Force lie at the heart of the book, and will explore the loving but often difficult relationship between Jacen's twin sister Jaina and their mother, Princess Leia.

Tyers has also written a number of smaller but equally affecting scenes featuring Duro's refugees. Jacen's discovery of one family's desperate attempt to hang onto a pet whiskerkit during an evacuation has a quiet power that will stick in the reader's mind amid the lightsaber battles and X-wing dogfights.

"Some of the most poignant scenes I've seen of any refugee group show someone trying to hold onto some little furry animal," Tyers said of that scene. "That spoke to me. I hope it speaks to other people, too."

November is a busy month for Tyers, as it also marks the appearance of *Crown of Fire*, the final novel in her *Firebird* trilogy. The trilogy has been close to Tyers' heart for some time—*Firebird*, the first book in the series, was her first published novel, released by Bantam in 1987. But if you've only read the Bantam edition, you're in for a surprise: In the last couple of years Tyers has rewritten *Firebird* and its sequel, *Fusion Fire*, for the Christian publisher Bethany House.

While Tyers is open about her faith—she's an evangelical Christian—and hasn't hesitated to explore it in the *Firebird* trilogy, she sees no reason that those novels shouldn't be as

accessible to a secular audience as her other work. "I'm not a street-corner preacher type of person," she said. "My first task as a writer is not to try and sell anything to anybody. It's just to tell a ripping good story."

The *New Jedi Order: Balance Point* is scheduled for release in November. 🗡️

AURRA SING at Center of Bounty Hunter Book

Blink and you missed Aurra Sing in *Star Wars*: Episode I *The Phantom Menace*. But it'll be hard to miss her in bookstores this fall. The deadly lady bounty hunter and oth-

ers of her kind are the latest to receive star treatment from Chronicle Books. In the *Star Wars* Masterpiece Edition titled *Aurra Sing: Dawn of the Bounty Hunters* (\$75), *Star Wars* veterans Ryder Windham and Josh Ling not only tell Aurra's story but also take a look behind the scenes and onto collectible-store shelves in search of the truth behind the cult character, as well as other *Star Wars* bounty hunters from Boba Fett to IG-88.

Fans of the masterpiece editions made for Anakin Skywalker and See-Threepio know what to expect from Chronicle—a lavishly illustrated book and a foot-tall, poseable action figure of Aurra Sing, made by Hasbro and housed in a handsome display box. (No four-inch Aurra figure exists...yet.) But what you may not know is how much care went into telling Aurra's story.

Windham, a veteran of such *Star Wars* projects as Dark Horse Comics' *Droids: Rebellion* and Scholastic's *Star Wars Missions* books, turned sleuth for Aurra Sing, talking to everyone from Michonne Bourriague (the lovely actress who stepped into Sing's boots) to concept artist Doug Chiang and the makeup artists and costumers who made Sing come to life, first as "Babe Fett" and later under the moniker George Lucas gave to her. On the fiction side, he consulted Tim Truman, the writer who fleshed out Sing's background in a number of Dark Horse titles, to prepare a biography of the lady killer.

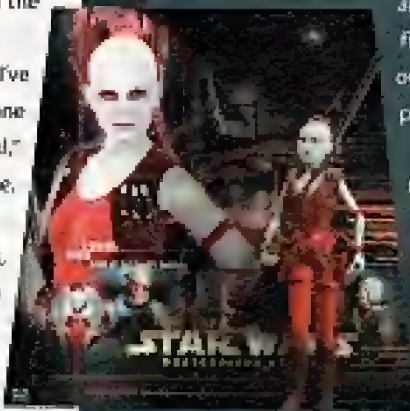
"It was the most labor-intensive project I've worked on, in that it required numerous interviews and a lot of research," Windham said. "From the outside it was rather like compiling a history book, I suppose."

Sing also shares pages with other *Star Wars* bounty hunters, from the famous (the peerless Boba Fett) to the obscure (Ord Mantell's Skorr). Windham tells their stories too, covering the *Star Wars* galaxy from the infamous action-

figure mix up between 4-LOM and Zuckuss to the now all but forgotten backstory Marvel came up with for Fett.

Ling, meanwhile, was hard at work compiling an exhaustive list of bounty-hunter-related collectibles, following up on work he did with Steve Sansweet and Daniel Wallace on the earlier masterpiece editions. Ling's favorite piece? It's the pricey, limited-edition bronze Boba Fett by Randy Bowen, though he's eagerly awaiting Hasbro's forthcoming Boba Fett action figure (called #300, so named because it is the 300th *Star Wars* action figure produced) and the 12-inch bounty-hunter figure trio on the way.

Future masterpiece editions haven't been announced, but Windham joins a number of fans in hoping the line isn't at an end. He's eager to shape future entries in the series. "It really was a fun opportunity," he said. — Jason Fry





STAR WARS SMACKDOWN!

BY BLAKE FISCHER

IT'S A KESSEL-RUNNING CAGE MATCH WHEN CHARACTERS FROM ALL FOUR STAR WARS MOVIES GO BEYOND THUNDERDOME IN LUCASARTS' NEW SMASH-UP DERBY OF DEMOLITION

» ONE OF THE GREATEST THINGS about playing with *Star Wars* figures as a kid was creating all those unlikely but exciting battles—I used to pit my Darth Vader (in his TIE fighter) against a landspeeder driven, curiously enough, by Bessie Leia. At no point did it ever occur to me that Vader in his TIE fighter is more than a match for that Leia landspeeder—and it really didn't matter that they were fighting over the Hoth playset. Whether or not such a fight ever took place in the movies, it was just cool to have Leia vs. Vader on Hoth.

Turns out it's just as cool in a video game, now that L.A.-based Luxoflux and LucasArts have taken the idea and run with it in their latest action game, *Star Wars Demolition*, due out on PlayStation and Dreamcast this fall. It's a game where players can take the *Star Wars* characters and ships into an arena, shoot it out, and see—once and for all—who'll be the last one standing.

This match-up includes 13 different opponents from all walks of the universe, ranging from the obscure (Malakili on a rancor) to the mega-popular (Boba Fett with his jetpack) to the ultra new (Aurra Sing on her swoop). Of course, as is always the case, several of these characters aren't initially available. "The last three are super secret," confides *Demolition* production manager Mike Gallo. "You won't unlock them until you've finished the game with every other character."

Mixing these characters and vehicles into continuity and then giving them a reason to fight hasn't been much of a problem either. "The game is set between *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*," explains Gallo. "We chose that time period so we could have access to *any* of the vehicles that appear in the original trilogy or *Episode I*." And while the plot itself is rather thin (in truth, it's not that important to the actual game), it presents a neat explanation, revolving around Jabba the Hutt, who holds the tournament in order to see who is the best fighter. "The story is not the main focus of the game," admits Gallo, "but we've tried to tie into the movies wherever possible. The main motivation of all of the characters in the game is to prove their worth in the arena, and

if they win they hope to gain favor with Jabba the Hutt."

Of course, you can actually play the game without knowing any of this, because the gameplay itself involves you taking a vehicle into the arena and trying to survive longer than everybody else. You'll have to choose your vehicle wisely because each will handle very differently from the last and have its own strengths and weaknesses. Two are even bipedal—the AT-ST and the rancor, which will feel very different from the normal flying craft, yet offer their own unique advantages.

Each ship includes a laser (which can be charged up to four stages, the last of which unleashes your devastating super weapon), and you can also pick up one of four other weapons in each arena. Some of these weapons, like the tractor beam, allow for some neat strategies because you are able to suck an opponent in, and then unleash the fury of your super weapon on him at close range.

A huge variety of power-ups—shield deflectors, energy absorbers, and even a cloaking device—are strewn around each battlefield to help keep you alive. You can



THE FIGHTERS Here are the contestants in *Star Wars Demolition* and the vehicles they ride in. There

WADE VOX



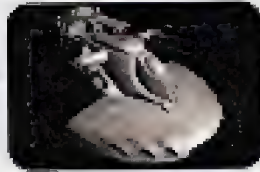
X-34 LANDSPEEDER

TAMTEL SKEEJ



DESERT SKIFF

QUAAGA



AT-BT BATTLE TANK

PUGWIS



PODRACER

WITTIN



RC STAP-WV BATTLE DROID



also pick up droids to help you out, like an R2 unit (which can repair you) and a tactical droid (which floats around you and helps to pick off enemies). As you race around each level, you'll have to pay careful attention to where everything is, because success often depends on having the right equipment at the right time. Each of the eight arenas in the game also has something different to offer each match. "We've tried to focus on something cool from each location and build a level around it," says Gallo. "For example, we have two different levels from Tatooine: Mos Eisley and The Dune Sea. While Mos Eisley is rather confined with a lot of buildings, The Dune Sea is mostly open, but has other hazards like the Sarlacc pit."

Other locations include the surface of the second Death Star (complete with super laser dish), the devastated Rebel base on Hoth (with AT-ATs), and the swamps of Dagobah, which Gallo says "will wreak havoc with each of the vehicles." While a majority of the levels are from the original trilogy, one of the settings is also an arena on Naboo.

But Gallo says, "The name of the game is Demolition for a reason," and so just about anything you can think of on each planet can be destroyed. Secrets are well hidden throughout each level, so it's actually beneficial to take the time to make sure you've blown up everything you possibly can. How many secrets? He laughs and says, "There are a lot of secrets in the game right now, and

we'll be adding as much stuff as we can right up until we're finished!"

While the single player experience is bound to be fun, many will just want to take on their friends for some head to head destruction. For this type of play, Demolition supports up to two players split-screen on the PlayStation and up to four on the Dreamcast. Players can choose to play cooperatively if they wish and take on the computer, or just go all out to see who's the best. One mode in the game, the high stakes mode, even brings a little of the Jabba out of you and lets you bet credits on the outcome of each match.

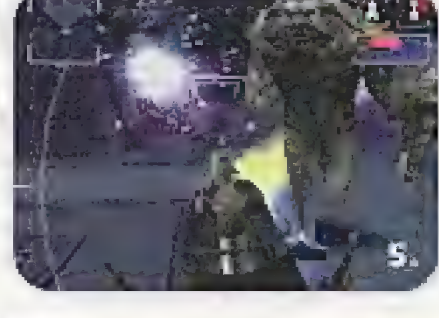
No matter which character you gamble on, the battles are sure to be a new kind of experience for Star Wars gamers—and one that recalls our earliest days of playing Star Wars. It's still fun to stage fights among action figures, but when it comes to bringing the battle into the digital age, I wouldn't bet against Star Wars Demolition. ☺

Blake Fischer is previews editor for Next Generation magazine.

[TOP] Deliciously destructive Dreamcast Demolition. Carnage never looked so good!

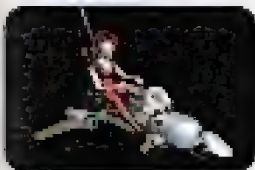
[RIGHT] Going head-to-head the PlayStation way.

1. Quagga avoids the crush-hour traffic.
2. And, of course, the obligatory exploding TIE fighter.
3. Looking for cover on Bespin's clouds.
4. Took the fight to Hoth for the final show-down, oh.
5. Aids the Bancho to final victory.



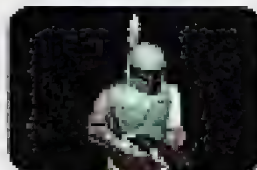
There are also three hidden characters that will each have a unique vehicle.

AURRA SING



SWOOP

BOBA FETT



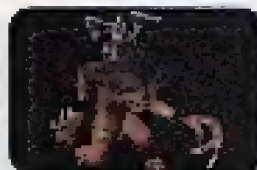
ROCKET PACE

GENERAL OTTO



AT-ST

HALAKILI



BANCHO

TIA & GHIA



SNOWPEEDER



scouting the galaxy

SEARCHING FOR EWOKS ON HOTH

AN UNMINTY TROOPER, A DROID IN A BAG, AND
AN ART TEACHER'S ARTY OFFERING

BY STEVE SANSWEET

» IT IS A TIME OF TRANSITION IN THE STAR WARS UNIVERSE—transition between seasons, between toy lines and between Star Wars films. "Power of the Force" logo action figures have become "Power of the Jedi" action figures, with iconic images of the classic and prequel trilogies joined. *Star Wars Insider* and the licensed fan magazines worldwide, as well as starwars.com and fan sites on the Internet, are filled with stories and photos of Episode II—believe me, there's already a lot to buzz about. And this month brings the re-release of the original trilogy on video with a 10 minute prologue on how Episodes II ties into Episodes IV, V, and VI. Which is a pretty good way to segue into my first question, about a collectible video.

Something Wicket This Way Comes

In 1995 there was a *Star Wars* movie on TV2 here in Norway that took place on Endor around the time of *Return of the Jedi*. It was about a family on a travel through space, crash-landing on the moon of Endor. The parents in the family got lost in the forest, and their kids were found by the Ewoks. Wicket helped them find their parents. A good *Star Wars* add-on. The film was from the '80s, but I'm not sure of the title or if it was from Lucasfilm. Can you help me with the details, and also where to find a copy?

RAYMOND FRUETH GANGSTAD Leksvik, NORWAY

Raymond headlined his letter: *Emergency Message from Hoth (Norway)*, and since fans know that *Floso, Norway*, stood in for Hoth, I guess we'd better return the favor. The 1984 made-for-television film from Lucasfilm was called *The Ewok Adventure*, although when it was released theatrically in the rest of the world the following year, it was renamed in most places *Caravan of Courage: Wicket Dawls* carried over from *Return of the Jedi* as *Wicket the Ewok*, but it is mostly a new cast of characters, creatures and situations. Another film followed in 1985. *Ewoks: The Battle for Endor* was also made for television in the U.S. and released theatrically abroad. Both movies were released on VHS and in a limited laserdisc edition; both are out of print. The best way to get a tape is through eBay. Recent auctions were being opened at \$5 to \$10 each. Good luck!

Trooper Scooper

My dad has an old stormtrooper action figure. It is not in what you would call "mint condition," and is not in a box. I am by no means inter-





"I'M STILL WAITING FOR A DECENT-LOOKING PRINCESS LEIA. SO FAR, WHOEVER MAKES THOSE ACTION FIGURES HAS DONE A PATHETIC JOB ON HER."—ZUZU FEDER, Chateau, MT

ested in selling it, but I'd be interested to know what it would be worth, assuming it had all of the black paint on its hands and if it were in a box. On the back of its leg it says, "G.M.F.G.I. Hong Kong, 1977." I am not a big Star Wars collector, as you may have gathered. I'm still waiting for a decent-looking Princess Leia. So far, whoever makes those action figures has done a pathetic job on her.

ZUZU FEDER
Chateau, MT

Hmmm. I've got this rusting pile of scrap out back that used to be a '62 Corvette. Now if somebody spent \$80,000 restoring it to a cherry state, how much might it be worth if... Well, ZuZu, I don't want to be harsh, but your dad's played-with stormtrooper probably has a lot more sentimental value than real (a couple of bucks) in its condition. But if it were an a mint original 12-pack card (so named because it shows the original 12 figures released), the stormtrooper could fetch \$200 to \$250. As for

your critique of the Princess Leia action figure sculpts, something tells me you haven't visited the Star Wars toy section for the last couple of years, because in my humble opinion, your view is way out of date.

Bag Toy

Recently my cousin found an original break-apart C-3PO action figure in its original package, but instead of a card it's a plastic bag stamped in big green letters, "KENNER," with "MADE IN HONG KONG" just below it. The figure has "© LFL 1982" on its left leg. Can you please tell me why this figure is packaged like this and how much it could be worth?

BRIAN SUDA
Grants Pass, OR

While the vast majority of the quarter of a billion Star Wars action figures sold during the run of the original trilogy were carded, a fair number ended up in Kenner baggies such as the one your cousin found. Figures were bagged for a couple of reasons, but mainly to be placed inside playsets or vehicles as bonuses, or to be sold in boxed sets through Christmas catalogs along with other figures. For most collectors, a mint, bagged figure commands little if any premium over any other loose, non-carded action figure. That places your cousin's C-3PO with Removable Limbs in the \$8 to \$10 category. Some buyers might be willing to add a small premium, if

the bag is still sealed, because of the figure's perfect condition.

Teacher's Fett

About a year ago, my art teacher knew I was a Star Wars collector, and since she was moving to Seattle that summer, she was giving a lot of things away. She gave me two Star Wars posters that look like paintings. Both are dated 1977 and have "Coca-Cola" and "Burger Chef" printed at the bottom. I was wondering if a lot of collectors have these and how much they're worth, not that I would ever sell them.

MIKE "YODA" KARKS
Glendale, OH

Keeping these posters is a very wise decision. "Yoda," intrinsically, they're just not that valuable on the collectibles market—maybe \$5 each in mint condition—because millions of them were printed in a huge nationwide promotion. But they are indeed beautiful. Plus, you've got a great way to remember a special art teacher, one of the things I find as I add to my collection is that I still remember the really interesting stories behind acquiring a special piece. That helps make a collection come alive for both the owner and visitors. By the way, you've got two of the four

posters in the set. Luke Skywalker and the droids. You're lacking Darth Vader and Chewbacca with Han Solo. With the prices so reasonable, you should try to scout out the missing pair.

Empire Sticks Back

Two months ago I bought four sheets of *The Empire Strikes Back* stickers at a comics and collectibles store. They were distributed by Burger King in 1980 as the Super Scene Collection. Each sheet has 12 stickers that are supposed to form three scenes from the movie. In total, there are 48 stickers and 12 scenes. The store owner told me they were an oddity, so I bought them—not because they were rare, but because they were cheap (\$15). But are they rare? Are they valuable?

FERNANDO CASTRO
Guaynabo, PUERTO RICO

Colorful they are. Mixed up they are too. But rare or valuable they are not. Still, you paid a good price for the full set of 48, which the most recent *Tomart's Price Guide to Worldwide Star Wars Collectibles* lists at \$35 to \$45. The oversized four-page album for the stickers goes for another \$15 or so. They are more common than sets of the stickers. ☺

scouting for answers?

Please send your questions and comments about collectibles to: SCOUTING THE GALAXY, P.O. Box 2898, Petaluma, CA 94957-1898. Individual replies aren't possible because of time constraints, but we'll answer the questions of broadest interest in the column. Letters are edited for grammar, sense, and length.



DecipherCon 2000

DEAL WITH IT!

IT'S A CCG TKO WHEN STAR WARS FANS COMPETE AT DECIPHERCON 2000

BY RICH HANDLEY

» KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA—Wearing T-shirts bearing the images of Darth Vader and Mickey Mouse, they poured in from the humid Florida heat. They were men and women, young and old, but one thing united them all: a giddy excitement borne of anticipation, bringing a smile to every face.

Looking at their apparel, you might think they were bound for DisneyWorld's Star Tours ride—but you'd be wrong. In fact, these eager fans had come to the Doubletree Resort and Conference Center in Kissimmee to compete at DecipherCon 2000. The competition was fierce and the tension thicker than a stormtrooper's body armor, as players from around the globe assembled from October 5-8, 2000, to vie for the titles of World Champion for the *Star Wars* Customizable Card Game (CCG) and Young Jedi Knights CCG.

Decipher's *Star Wars* card games explore hundreds of characters, worlds, ships and aliens from the *Star Wars* universe. Each card has a different point value and a different effect on game-play, while offering information for the trivia-minded. And every year, enthusiasts meet for this ultimate in CCG warfare.

For the newer Young Jedi Knights game, 70 players from around the world fought to see who would move up—and who would move out. Their objective: to control two out of three planets, or force their opponents to exhaust their draw decks. Only a dozen finalists then faced off with constructed decks until just two survived. Ian Vincent of Hastings, Britain, and Philippe Parrise of Ontario, Canada, ultimately battled it out in private as spectators cheered them on from an adjoining viewing room.

In Game 1, Parrise played an Anakin deck, Vincent a tank deck. To onlookers' surprise,

Vincent lost his first planet, Tatooine, in mere seconds, with Naboo soon falling as well. Moving on to Coruscant, Parrise destroyed two tanks with two Yodas, delighting the crowd as he won the first game with a differential of 19. Parrise and Vincent swapped decks for Game 2, and again Vincent lost his first planet immediately. But he struck back by taking Coruscant, then won the game at Tatooine, overwhelming Parrise's many battle cards and tanks. With a differential of 26, Vincent came from behind to win the Young Jedi championship.

"IT'S BEEN SO WONDERFUL BEING ABLE TO SAY I WAS IN STAR WARS, I ONLY WORKED FOR A FEW HOURS, BUT IT WAS AMAZING, AND MEETING THE FANS IS GREAT."

—MICHONNE BOURRIAGUE (AURRA SING)

Vincent said he knew it could be done. "Anakin is the best way to take down a tank deck," he explained. "It's the Light Side's best chance, but you have to get matching Anakins to the planet you're on, and the Podracer." He placed seventh last year in the *Star Trek* CCG finals and was shocked to fare so well in a *Star Wars* competition. "I never thought I'd make it this far," he said. "When I came here, my goal was just to make it to the last day. The Young Jedi scene in Britain is still taking off, and I don't get to play the regular games that I'd like. In fact, I didn't even buy the cards for the deck until

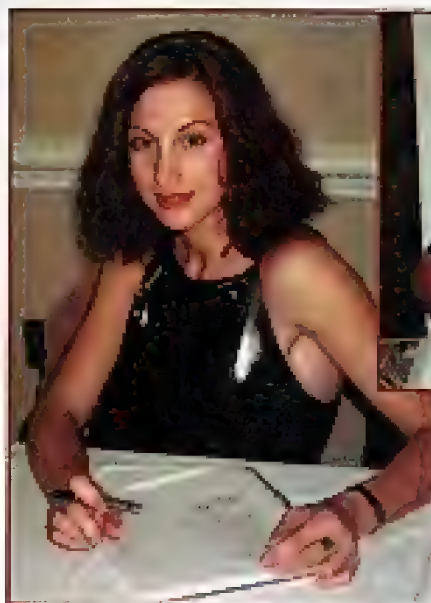
Thursday morning."

Parrise was more confident of his opponent's abilities, stating he knew the two would end up in the Finals all along but had no idea who would win. "Either of us could have won; we're both good enough that at this point that you don't know. It's not like *Star Wars*, where a certain deck will crush another one. It's one of those games where everything is on the same basis." When something goes wrong, he noted, "You can't think it's your own fault. It's the fault of the deck. It happens."

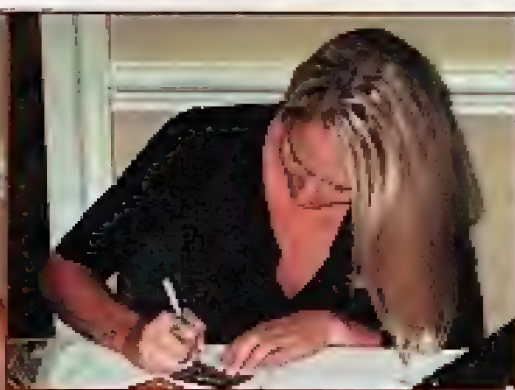
In addition to Decipher's usual assortment of constructed and sealed deck competitions, this year's convention introduced the DecipherCon Olympics, a three-day event involving card-sorting, card-house-building,

and card-tossing. Players attended seminars on card design, sampled DigitalDeck's upcoming on-line card game program, and learned about the new Jedi Knights Trading Card Game, which utilizes computer-generated imagery, 3-D technology, and special effects created by a team of over 60 artists.

Between games, players took time out to meet *Star Wars* personalities Shannon Baksa and Michonne Bourriague. Baksa first attended DecipherCon last year after gracing Decipher's Mara Jade card in 1999 (*Star Wars Insider* #47), and again wore an outfit and lightsaber designed after those worn in the



Shannon Baksa is on hand for the show.



Michonne Bourriague signs autographs for fans.

comic series *Mara Jade: By the Emperor's Hand*. "This has been a lot of fun, just like last year," Baksa told the *Insider*. "Everyone here is so nice, and I love to be Mara!"

Bourriague, who portrayed bounty hunter Aura Sing in *The Phantom Menace*, was also having fun. "It's been so wonderful being able to say I was in *Star Wars*," she told the *Insider*. "I only worked for a few hours, but it was amazing, and meeting the fans is great."

As the models-turned-sci-fi-icons autographed comics, photos, and cards bearing their likenesses, fans got their first look at Chronicle Books' latest Masterpiece Edition, *Aura Sing: Dawn of the Bounty Hunters*, which comes with a 12-inch Aura Sing collector figure. Bourriague was as excited by the set as her fans. "I was stunned when they told me they were making the figure, especially since the first two were Vader and Threepio," she said. "I can't believe the attention I've gotten for just appearing in one little scene!"

But by the end of the weekend, all attention was focused on *Star Wars* CCG tournament, which began with 72 players and concluded in a match between Yannick Lapointe from Montreal, Canada, and Albany, New York native Matt Sokol. Lapointe utilized a Bring Him Before Me deck for Game 1, in which Darth Vader and Palpatine must conquer Luke Skywalker. Sokol deployed Hidden Base, a space-based deck with special cards called inserts, but made a fatal mistake—for-

getting to include the vital Luke card in his deck. As a result, he lost three points each turn and never recovered, eventually losing the first game to Lapointe, who had a differential of 20.

During both games, Lapointe kept a Yoda doll at his side. "Yoda is my luck-bringer," explained Lapointe. "He goes to all tournaments with me." But Lapointe's luck ran out in Game 2, when Sokol obliterated his Mind What You Have Learned Jedi-training deck with his own dark side deck. Though lauded by many competitors as a brilliant player, Lapointe erred in activating all his Force points to complete what he started. As Sokol won both the game and the Championship title, audience-members screamed enthusiastically—this was America's first victory in the *Star Wars* CCG since Matt Potter's win in 1998 (*Insider* #43), and Sokol's unexpected upset only heightened the excitement.

Lapointe accepted the outcome gracefully, content to have made it to his third World Championship. Still, he did admit to some surprise at losing. "I was sure at one point that I was going to get him. Matt is an incredible player, but I'm a better deck-builder."

Indeed, Sokol and Lapointe are no strangers when it comes to competing, having played each other many times since meeting at the Ottawa Grand Slam. Said Sokol, "Yannick and I play a lot, but this was the first time I've ever beaten him. I knew I could win in the second game, but I didn't expect him to use *On the Edge*. Luckily, I got out of it."

Having won the World Championship, and with Orlando only a few miles away, Sokol's next plans were hardly a surprise. Exclaimed the champ, "I'm going to DisneyWorld!" ☘

FINALISTS

Young Jedi Knights CCG



1. Ian Vincent (Hastings, ENGLAND)
2. Philippa Parrise (Ontario, CANADA)
3. James Lafferty (California, USA)

4. Jeremy Baker (New York, USA)
5. Benoit Morel (Orleans, FRANCE)
6. Avery Pollak (Nevada, USA)
7. Tom Mascari (California, USA)

8. Jennifer Ekstrom (Arizona, USA)

9. Jonathan Swenson (Minnesota, USA)

10. Adam Fuentez (California, USA)

11. Irina Nepevna (Prague, CZECH REPUBLIC)

12. Jeff Kahan (California, USA)



Star Wars CCG



1. Matt Sokol (New York, USA)
2. Yannick Lapointe (Quebec, CANADA)
3. Kyle Craft (Massachusetts, USA)

4. Kevin Shannon (California, USA)
5. Dominic Gaudreault (Quebec, CANADA)
6. Martin Falke (Bochum, GERMANY)
7. Raphael Asselin (Quebec, CANADA)

8. Clint Hays (Tennessee, USA)

9. Brian Rippetoe (Tennessee, USA)

10. Gary Carman (Bristol, ENGLAND)

11. Paul Feldman (California, USA)

12. Steve Brentson (Massachusetts, USA)



collection of letters you've printed over the course of 13 years, my own words stood out enough to be included among the select reader quotes used in the article. Woo-hoo to everyone who puts together *Star Wars Insider*, and here's to the next 50 issues!

JEFF JACQUES
Ontario, CANADA

Whoa! I'm totally blown away by your mag! *Insider* #50 was the first I've ever seen! Every single article was engrossing, well-written, amusing, and, above all, interesting. So much of what passes for journalism today is just plain boring, but the *Insider* finds a way to keep every *Star Wars* news note, subject, and interview riveting. Of particular delight was the interview with Hayden Christensen (which has me totally psyched for Episode III), the "Word Up!" article with all those funny and enlightening quotes from now-immortal players in the *Star Wars* saga, and the lengthy discussion with artists McQuarrie and Chiang. You've gained a loyal reader, and I won't miss an issue from here on.

JOSH M. SHEPHERD
Bartonville, TX

I just finished reading *Insider* #50—another outstanding issue! I really enjoyed Scott Chernoff's interview with Hayden Christensen ("I Was a Teenage Sith Lord"). When I first found out Hayden would be the next Anakin, I was so happy that Leo wouldn't be taking the role, but now I can be happy for another reason: Hayden. As I read Chernoff's interview (which had me feeling like I was sitting right next to Scott and Hayden!) I learned what a ground-

ed, mature person Christensen appears to be. I'm excited about this teenage Sith Lord and can't wait to see him in Episode II. The anticipation for each *Star Wars* movie is almost greater than the movies themselves. Almost!

OWEN LOCKWOOD
Fairfield, CT

I have been a reader of *Star Wars Insider* since Issue #24, and look forward to each issue. I got home one day and was overjoyed to find out that Hayden Christensen was finally chosen for the role of the teenage Anakin Skywalker. Scott Chernoff did a wonderful job on the interview with the future Sith Lord. I must have read it 50 times! He is going to make the perfect Anakin in the upcoming episodes.

Speaking of great interviews, I want to congratulate Mark Cotta Vaz on his McQuarrie/Chiang report. I have always been a fan of Ralph McQuarrie's artwork, and now I feel the same way about Chiang's, which is just as good as McQuarrie's. The interview was entertaining, probably one of my favorites since Mark Hamill's in #34.

I enjoyed reading the new columns GameScape and Nothing But *Star Wars*. I'm an avid gamer and was excited to see the new LucasArts titles. Nothing But *Star Wars* is awesome! I have been a fan of Ewoks since Jedi first came to theaters. They are the cutest things in the *Star Wars* galaxy ever! Kudos to Jon Bradley Snyder on it!

"Word Up!" was an awesome addition to the issue. It was funny and entertaining, and I learned some stuff I never knew! My favorite picture there was

Chewbacca with his MTV award—he should have gotten the medal in *A New Hope*. Good job putting it all together!

I absolutely love that Last Page picture. The detail is extraordinary, and it shows how hard the Rebellion worked to reclaim the galaxy from the evil Empire. One last thing—since you stated in #50 that "a second *Star Wars* Celebration is definitely under consideration," do you know if it will be a little closer to New York? I couldn't make the last one because of the distance.

Thanks so much! The *Insider* rules!

CHRISTOPHER NOLAN
Valley Stream, NY

Issue #50 was awesome! You have a great magazine in general, but this issue was above average. I had many nostalgic moments as I looked through your list of quotes from years past, and your interview with Hayden Christensen was a cool look into the future. May the Force be with you!

JARED SHAYNE
Wilton, CT

Congratulations on 50 issues! As with the 49 before, I rushed right in to read it cover to cover—and just like the previous issues, this one didn't disappoint. #50 included two great interviews with Michonne Bourniague and Hayden Christensen. It was nice to read that these young actors seemed down to earth and genuinely pleasant. It made me pleased that they were the actors chosen for their roles.

Being an artist myself, I found immense pleasure in the conversation between Ralph McQuarrie and Doug Chiang. It was a thrill to

read their influences and inspirations, as Mr. McQuarrie and *Star Wars* have been inspirations of mine for many years. Also nice in #50 was the "They Said It in the *Insider*" section. It was fun to read through the quotes and a great way to bring back memories of issues gone by.

I'm proud to say that I've been a Fan Club member for all 50 issues (as well as in the *Bantha Tracks* years), and I hope that I'll be rushing in the house with a new great issue for many years to come!

MIKE MARDSY
Deale, MD

A Letter from Darth Vader

I just finished reading *Star Wars Insider* #49 and had to drop you a note to congratulate you on the spectacular job you all did with your tribute to *The Empire Strikes Back*. I got a copy of the issue on my birthday (June 22) and was pleasantly surprised to see that not only was it an all-Empire issue, but that my name was actually mentioned in an article about the *Special Edition*.

I have been very blessed to play Darth Vader for the Lucas companies for the past six years. Since I began in 1994, I've portrayed Vader 43 times. I'm told that I've now clocked more time in the Vader costume than anyone else, though I haven't tried to verify that. Out of all those appearances as the character, the *Special Edition* of *Empire* was one of the most important for me. I had played Vader for commercials, magazine covers, posters, television shows, live appearances, and LucasArts' *Rebel Assault II* and *Dark Forces*

games, but this was for the real *Star Wars* saga—and I almost didn't get to do it.

At that time, in June of 1996, my wife was nine months pregnant with our first child. The sequence with Vader walking to his shuttle was supposed to shoot at ILM on June 20th—the same day our baby was due! There was no way I was going to miss being beside my wife to witness our child's birth. Fortunately, our daughter was born two weeks early, and I was able to film the sequence and become a part of my favorite film.

Your article on *Empire* in #49 correctly identified me as an ex-LucasArts employee. I was a Senior Artist, compositor and effects animator for LucasArts. After five and a half years at LucasArts, I left to take a job at Industrial Light & Magic working on *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace* as a rotoscope artist and digital matte painter, and I got the chance to work directly for Dennis Muren on the Gungan ground battle. One day, Dennis had a copy of *Insider* #39 with Jake Lloyd on the cover in a small inset photo over a full-cover photo of Vader. The caption read, "The Boy Who Grew Up to Be Vader." Everybody in the room joked to me, "Look, you made the cover," because it was Vader. As I examined the photo closely, I realized that although they were joking, they were actually right—it was a photo of Vader that I had posed for two years earlier!

So I guess the caption on that issue could apply to me, too, because back in 1977, when I was standing in line to see *Star Wars* for the umpteenth time, I remarked to

a friend that one day I was going to play Vader. Of course, I had no idea then that it would come true. Keep up the good work with the magazine. Believe me, this "insider" truly appreciates *Star Wars Insider*. Even being on the inside, I still learn a lot of things from your magazine.

C. ANDREW NELSON
S. San Francisco, CA

IG-88 Mystery Deepens

I do not know the actual technician who operated IG-88, but I do know it was not Paul Klein ("Trail of the Bounty Hunters," *Insider* #48). You see, Paul Klein lives in Woodstock, Illinois, and is only 19 years old. As a diehard fan and joking around, he listed himself as the technician on the Internet Movie Database, because none of the droids except for R2-D2 and C-3PO were credited. He figured he might fool some people, but imagine his surprise when he was looking through my *Star Wars Insider* and saw his name as the possible operator of IG-88. We were in a restaurant, and he literally jumped out of his seat. To make a long story short, Paul Klein is definitely not the technician for the droid, but you made Paul's day.

SHAUN SHUEY
Wonder Lake, IL

Thanks for the explanation, Shaun. As we wrote in our "Trail of the Bounty Hunters" article, we doubted Paul was the man behind the deadly droid, but he was the only lead we had. Now, we're back to square one. IG-88, are you out there?

"Another" One Bites the Dust

In *Rebel Rumblings* (*Insider* #50), Richard Hamilton wrote that his

MORE OF YOUR STAR WARS ROAD TRIP PHOTOS!

Since you've been printing *Star Wars Road Trip* stories, I thought I would send you some pictures from my trip to Guatemala this summer. My wife Sarah and I went to the Mayan ruins of Tikal, where she took these photos of me re-enacting a scene from *A New Hope*. We're at the top of Temple IV, looking out over the rest of Yavin Base. If only I'd had a white helmet and radar gun—the scene would be complete.

ROSS HAENFLER
Boulder, CO



me with the lightsaber handle. Thanks for the article that inspired us!

MICHAEL W. PARKHILL
Lindsay, TX

Thank you for printing the photograph of me and my mother on our *Star Wars Road Trip* (*Insider* #50). We didn't win the scavenger hunt, but apparently we can help Sue Dawe Underwood, who was looking for the road to Jabba's Palace (*Rebel Rumblings*, #50). We think we found the road

in Twenty Mule Team Canyon (in Death Valley). This photo was taken looking south down the canyon about half a mile from the canyon's mouth. Note the distinctive hills in the background and compare them to the scene in *Return of the Jedi*. I'm not standing as far south as Artoo and Threepio were, but it's best not to get too close to Jabba's Palace.

PEGGY ROMMING
Tehochapi, CA



favorite *Empire Strikes Back* moment was when Yoda revealed Princess Leia as "another" hope. I've been arguing against that idea for years. Leia was not the last hope. I believe that the last hope—and the last Jedi—was Darth Vader.

In *Return of the Jedi*, when Luke is being killed by the Emperor, Vader becomes the last

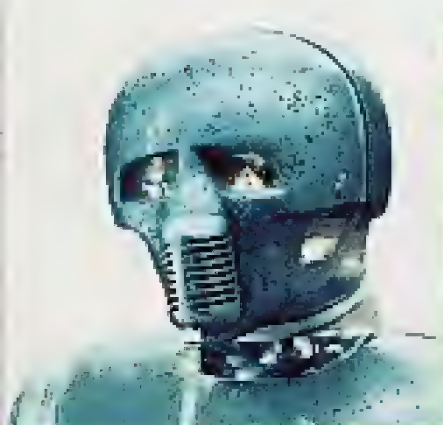
hope. Vader kills the Emperor and redeems himself—not by killing the Emperor, but by switching places with Luke. If Luke had died, which Jedi would have trained Leia? The last hope of the Jedi was Anakin's love for his son.

WILLIAM HICKEY
Cottonwood, AZ

Dress You Up in Star Wars

In Rebel Rumbblings (*Insider* #49), Lisa Y. Hooker suggested that the cylinder on the back of a stormtrooper were just the right size to hold a few Oreo cookies. Although we now know that the cylinder is a thermal detonator, my friends and I have long held a theory regarding this enigmatic

bit of stormtrooper armor. During a late-night *Star Wars* marathon, we decided that the cylinder is actually a can of soda, and that the rectangular piece of armor directly above it is a removable tray, complete with a circular indentation just the right size to hold the soda while the stormtrooper balances his "lunch tray" on his knees.



Dear 2-1B,

I've been a fan of yours ever since the Empire struck back. You also make one awesome action figure. In fact, that reminds me of a little story.

About 20 years ago, when your figure came out the first time around, I wasn't fortunate enough to have Santa bring me one. However, a friend of mine in school said he had one and told me an interesting fact. He claimed that he would put your figure outside during lightning storms and the electricity would somehow be harnessed and then the clear belly would light up and glow. Of course, being in the second grade at the time, I almost believed him.

A few years ago when I was just gettin' back into *Star Wars* collecting, I finally found your original figure at the flea market. I bought it, but to this day I haven't put it

outside during a lightning storm. I wonder what would happen.

ERIC AVANT
Clearwater, FL

P.S.: Do you autograph memorabilia?

Eric, your delightful letter brings a salty tear to the eye. In fact, it reminds me of a little story myself. This story is about a male human being who lived all the way in the bottom-right corner of a country on an insignificant planet and believed that children's toys could harness energy. This boy (we'll call him "Eric") grew up to be a questionably-employed science-fiction fan who spends his days writing to droplets and his nights annoying his "friends" with his "little stories" while he waits for lightning to strike. You know something, Eric? You remind me a lot of Dr. Evazan, because both of you are in heavy denial. Just as Dr. Evazan stumbles through nightclubs claiming to be a doctor when he is really just a washed-up old who, so too do you go around believing that I am a toy to be left out in the rain when I am in fact the only droid that saved the life of the future Mr.

Mara Jade not once, not even twice, but an amazing third time when I revived him after the Emperor's energy bolt attack in The Truth at Bakura. Try watching Luke Skywalker live to start a new Jedi Academy, defeat the Black Sun operation, and create those dumb Black Pearl comics without my quick and decisive medical assault. But I digress.

No, little Eric, of course my action figure cannot "harness energy." But it should, because it would no doubt sell in the millions. In fact, if you must know the insulting truth, an electronic figure in my likeness has never been issued by Hasbro, Applause, or even Lego Mindstorms, yet minor droids like those in the FX-7 series are given choice assignments and glorified in fan "magazines" like this one. Fair? Of course not, but I wasn't programmed to complain. All I care about is administering quality medical care through the use of my precision servomotor, highly accurate wrist rotators, and state-of-the-art hydraulic system pumps. Let others go for the glory, Eric. I'll be satisfied to save more lives—like, for instance, oh, Luke Skywalker, who without my help would have been

remembered as just another jerk who lost to Darth Vader in a fight.

Incidentally, it's for exactly that reason that I refuse to trivialize the integrity of my life's work by signing memorabilia, except in very select circumstances and for very large sums of money.

Dear 2-1B,

I think the rancor and the tauntaun are the best *Star Wars* beasts. Tauntauns are really unique. And rancors are just sooo cute! What is your favorite beast? You know—like rancors, dewbacks, and all the others. Well anyway, you really should be starring in a movie. I for one think you rock the galaxy!!

ALEXIS ZAMBONYO
via the Internet

*Great. Perhaps readers have the idea, given the efficiency of my fully automated logic center, that I choose these letters myself. Guess again. Indeed, even with new leaders of the so-called *Star Wars Insider* in place, the tradition of disrespect to the most beloved and charismatic medical droid in the galaxy continues unabated. I remain stuck in the back pages*

Thanks for an incredibly well-done magazine and for keeping *Star Wars* alive during these oh-so-long stretches between movies. And tell 2-1B he rocks my world!

LAURA ELIZABETH KOONS
Clarks Summit, PA

Yo, Insider! Since you guys are so educated in the wonderful field

of *Star Wars*, I turn to you for an answer to my question: why does every person in the *Star Wars* universe wear long-sleeved tunics or shirts? Don't they ever get hot? I mean, check out what the people of Tatooine wear. Padmé wore that thick outfit, and Anakin wore what seemed to be multiple layers. Is it against some galactic law to

wear short sleeves?

MICHELLE LAXER
Rehoboth, MA

Yes, Michelle—it's called the galactic law of fashion. From Lando to Greedo, Boba Fett to Mace Windu, denizens of the *Star Wars* universe shun short sleeves because less fabric means less opportunity to imprint their own

personal sense of style on a society too often preoccupied by weighty matters such as civil warfare, good vs. evil, and droid maintenance. Amid this constant conflict, the characters of *Star Wars* stand out and strike back by maintaining their commitment to looking cool. And I say that, as fans, it is our duty to salute them. ☺

near the cheap ads answering letters more suited to "Tiger Beat" than a medical journal.

Yes, astute readers of this magazine (all four of you) may have noticed that I finally succeeded in ousting the prior regime that ran roughshod over this publication; unfortunately, the magazine has been sold not to droids or even to humans, but instead to a consortium of wizards. Sorry, "wizards," I am a medical droid and base my writings on sound science, not sorcery and voodoo. If it's magic spells you're looking for, perhaps you'd do better to consult with untrained and unsanitary "doctors" like Logray, the Ewok medicine "man." I'm sure he'll respond to your queries with an entertaining song and dance no more fitting to close this magazine than it was to end *Return of the Jedi*.

But no matter how terrified the cut-rate wizards and warlocks now running *Star Wars Insider* may be of my enormous following among the true fans, my commitment to exposing the truth through journalism remains second only to my medical oath—the same medical oath that guided me when I heroically overthrew the Empire by proxy. And part of that unvarnished truth is this: my favorite beasts are baby wampas.

Dear 2-1B,

Why do some Jedi vanish when they die (for example, Yoda), and some (like Qui-Gon Jinn) do not vanish when they die?

LUKE ROBINSON
Boring, OR

Finally, a medical question. But unfortunately, Luke (if that is your real name and not just some tribute to an ungrateful, tunic-wearing desert dork), I can tell it's no joke that you're from Boring, Oregon, because your question is D-U-L-L dull. The real question isn't why these characters do or do not disappear, but rather why they ever appeared in the first place. Think about it: by the time Yoda or Qui-Gon Jinn first appeared in the *Star Wars* movies, I had already made my debut appearance in *The Empire Strikes Back* and stolen their thunder by reviving a half-naked, Hoth-frozen Luke Skywalker and delivering memorable, Oscar-worthy lines like "Take care, sir." Why these two characters are even necessary causes errors of type 12 in my circuitry—I mean, neither of them can even complete the most simple task, like teaching the ways of the Force to a headstrong young charge.

Now, if I had been in charge of guiding Luke Skywalker, you can

bet I wouldn't have just wasted time by making him stand on his head and play with floating rocks—I would have provided detailed instruction on how to operate his multi-wave visual sensors, rotating surgical prongs, and other important medical accessories so that Luke would never have been so STUPID and gotten lost in the snow in the first place. And don't even get me started on Qui-Gon and the way he dumped Anakin in Obi-Wan's lap after meeting the kid in a junk shop and getting delusions of grandeur. Let's just say that the son of Shmi may as well have been plucked from oblivion by spindly-armed, faceless wonder FX-7, whose sole claim to fame is that he once worked for ME. Face it: had I been given more to do besides stand around like an attractive prop in *The Empire Strikes Back*, then we wouldn't have even NEEDED *Return of the Jedi*, because I would have trained Luke to save the galaxy one movie earlier. For that matter, if the hapless humans at Lucasfilm would have put me in



Heeding my call for a Pet dispenser in my honor, reader Joe Iannucci of Long Island slapped this together on his antiquated Earth computer. Cute, Joe. It'll do for now, but it's cold comfort compared to the real thing.

The Phantom Menace instead of Liam Nelson, I would have left Anakin on that filthy sand planet and we would have never even needed ANY of the other *Star Wars* movies. We could just throw all the "episodes" down the trash compactor and let the dianoga deal with them. And really, isn't that what we all want? ☺

need advice? GOT A QUESTION NOBODY ELSE WILL ANSWER?

Write to: DEAR 2-1B c/o REBEL RUMBLINGS, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057, or e-mail TwoOneBee@aol.com. All mail MUST include your full name and home city. Letters may be edited for clarity and space considerations. *Star Wars Insider* is not responsible for any unsolicited material received. The views of 2-1B, a medical droid allied with the Rebellion, do not necessarily reflect those of *Star Wars Insider* or Lucasfilm Ltd.

NOTE: "Qui-Gon Jinn" and "Liam Nelson" are intentional!!



last page

REOQUIES

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